

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 LL19 9LG on Friday, 1 February 2013 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Representing Denbighshire County Council

Councillors Bill Tasker, Julian Thompson-Hill, Margaret McCarroll, Arwel Roberts and Joe Welch

Representing Religious Denominations

Mr. Dominic Oakes, Rev. B H Jones, Rev. Martin Evans-Jones, Mrs E Wright and Ms S Harris

Co-opted Members

Ms. Tania Ap Siôn

ALSO PRESENT

Chief Officer of the Regional School Effectiveness & Improvement Services (RSEIS) (ED), Senior Learning Adviser RE (PL) and Clerk to SACRE (SLW)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dewi Owens, Mrs Cate Harmsworth, Ms. Ali Ballantyne, Mr G Craigen and Councillor Alice Jones

The Reverend Martin Evans-Jones (Vice-Chair) agreed to act as Chair due to Maxine Bradshaw being unable to attend the meeting.

SILENT REFLECTION

The meeting began with a few minutes of silent reflection.

1 APOLOGIES

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of personal or prejudicial interest had been raised.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

The Senior Learning Adviser RE (SLA:RE) informed the Committee of a sponsored walk which had been organised, a letter/email of which had recently been circulated. The walk had been planned to bring together those interested in Religious Education within the counties of Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham. It was one of many being organised throughout Wales and England promoting the 40th anniversary of the Religious Education Council (REC).

The walk was scheduled to take place on Saturday, 11th May, meeting at 9.30 am for a 10.00 am start in the car park of the Britannia Inn, Llangollen. It was planned to take in the sites of Valle Crucis Abbey, the Pillar of Eliseg and Llantysilio Church.

In the hope of attracting as many participants as possible, the walk was to be in two sections. The first section would be a 2 mile leisurely walk from the Britannia Inn to the Canal, returning either by the same route or through the primrose and bluebell woodland. At the Canal, for those who would prefer a slightly more strenuous 4 mile walk, the planned route would take walkers past Llantysilio Church and Llantysilio Hall returning via Pen-y-Bryn. Once the walk had been completed, there would be a buffet lunch held at the Britannia Inn (which would incur a small cost of approximately £5.00).

The walk had been arranged to provide an opportunity to raise money for the REC and another charity chosen for support by each local team. Notification of participation needed to be received by Friday 1st March to the SLA:RE. Contact details had been included within the paperwork which had been sent out previously.

4 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held on 5th October, 2013 (previously circulated) were submitted.

Accuracy –

Mrs. Elaine Wright confirmed she had emailed her apologies for the previous meeting but, they had not been received.

Dominic Oakes stated that when discussing advice at LEA section on exam results, he felt there should have been a caveat added as only a small sample had been used as examples. He did not think this came across within the minutes.

Regarding the Analysis of Inspection Reports on page 7, the Senior Learning Adviser RE (SLA:RE) verbally gave an update. The issue had been raised during an Estyn Inspection in the summer of 2012, that Ysgol Y Faenol were less effective in promoting global citizenship. The SLA:RE confirmed he had been in contact with the school and Ysgol Y Faenol had assured SLA:RE that global citizenship was now an item on their school evaluation and were mapping it throughout the curriculum.

Page 9 – the Literacy / Numeracy within RE competition for schools deadline had been extended to the spring term.

RESOLVED that subject to the above, the minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 5th October, 2012 be received and approved as a correct record.

5 REGIONAL SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS & IMPROVEMENT SERVICES (RSEIS)

Elwyn Davies, Interim Chief Officer of the Regional School Effectiveness & Improvement Service (RSEIS) (CO: RSEIS) presented a verbal report outlining the service being offered to schools as from 1st April, 2013.

Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Services (RSEIS) were a newly formed service working with schools across Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham local authorities.

CO:RSEIS was currently on secondment from Flintshire County Council. The interim post commenced in June 2012 and would conclude in August 2013. The permanent Chief Officer interviews were to take place in the middle of February, 2013. There had been no confirmation as to where the newly appointed Chief Officer would be based.

The six North Wales local authorities agreed to co-operate as a consortium. There were four consortiums in total within Wales.

The CO:RSEIS confirmed the Operational Structure would need to be adapted as time went on.

Two translators were to be recruited. The positions were to be advertised imminently for one full-time permanent translator and one full-time temporary translator.

There were planned to be three bases:-

- Base 1 - Ynys Mon & Gwynedd – staff to be based in Caernarfon with hot desks available in Llangefni
- Base 2 - Conwy & Denbighshire – Staff to be based in Ffordd Dinerth, Conwy with hot desks available in Ruthin
- Base 3 - Flintshire & Wrexham - Staff to be based in Mold with hot desks at a school in Wrexham although there were also a number of locations available for hot desks.

Within each Base there would be one Senior System Leader, and 2 x Admin Support, plus System Leaders. The numbers of System Leaders for each Base varies as follows:-

- Base 1 - 10 x FTE System Leaders
- Base 2 - 8 x FTE System Leaders
- Base 3 - 9 x FTE System Leaders

There would be in total, 30 Senior Leaders and System Leaders. 21 System Leaders had been appointed to date with an additional six to be appointed at the end of February. Phil Lord, the SLA:RE had been appointed as a System Leader and would be based within the Conwy & Denbighshire location.

The first part of the job would be to monitor, challenge and support schools. The SLA:RE, in his new post, would cover 12 schools. System Leaders may occasionally be asked to cover schools outside their region. Another element would be curriculum support co-ordination.

There was a requirement of a minimum of 16 bi-lingual staff. This requirement had already been reached through the staff currently appointed. In terms of the first aspect of the role, they would allocate six days to each school. There would be three meetings per year, autumn, spring and summer. Those six days would include writing reports etc., and updating the website for the service.

A commissioning budget of £250,000 would be available to broker additional support for local authorities and schools.

A Joint Committee was to be formed. The Education Portfolio Members of the Joint Committee would have voting rights. Feeding in from the User Groups as follows:-

- (i) Six Primary Head representatives, one from each local authority and one from the group to be nominated to sit on the Joint Committee
- (ii) Six Governors, one from each local authority and one from the group to be nominated to sit on the Joint Committee.

An Inter Authority Agreement was to be agreed and put in place.

The SLA:RE currently supported Denbighshire, Flintshire and Conwy. It had been agreed for the SLA:RE to carry out work for SACRE at a cost to the local authority.

It was clarified that the service would commence on the 1st April, 2013. Within the draft Service Level Agreement, monthly meetings were to take place to discuss the outcomes in schools and to look at which schools would be in need of greater support.

RESOLVED that the verbal report be received and noted.

6 ANALYSIS OF INSPECTION REPORTS

The Senior Learning Adviser RE (SLA:RE) presented the Analysis of Inspection Report (previously circulated).

Two schools had received an Estyn Inspection in October 2012, namely:

- Blessed Edward Jones Catholic High School, Rhyl
- Ysgol Clocaenog,

The SLA:RE stated that on the whole, the reports were positive. The only recommendation from the Estyn Inspector had been for Blessed Edward Jones Catholic High School to develop the co-ordination of the personal and social education programme.

Councillor Margaret McCarroll raised a concern that she had been told both the Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher had resigned from Blessed Edward Jones Catholic High School. This had been a very disappointing piece of news especially as the school had recently been progressing so well.

The SLA:RE stated there was no further information regarding the proposed amalgamation of Blessed Edward Jones Catholic High School, Rhyl and St. Brigids School, Denbigh.

The SLA:RE confirmed within his current role, he could contact Blessed Edward Jones school to assist improving the development of co-ordination of the personal and social education programme but under his new role, this would require an agreement from RESIS.

RESOLVED that:-

- *The report be received and noted*
- *A letter be sent to each of the schools informing them that their Inspection Report had been considered, congratulating them for good features identified, and reminding them of the services of the Senior Learning Adviser RE and School Improvement Officers in relation to any areas for development or key issues needing addressing.*
- *To request the LEA to distribute the letters to the schools involved.*

7 EXAMINATION RESULTS 2012

The Senior Learning Adviser RE (SLA:RE) presented the Examination Results 2012 report (previously circulated).

The report contained the detailed results for examinations at GCSE and Advanced Level Religious Studies for the year 2011 and 2012, together with an analysis of the differences and trends.

The report was for members to be able to exercise their functions in relation to their statutory duty to monitor provision for RE in schools, and to be fully informed as to results for the year.

The information received regarding the Full Course was extremely positive. The Short Course was used by some schools to enable pupils to obtain a qualification.

It was clarified that A* - G were classed as qualification grades.

Schools and the LA are using the "Fischer Family Trust" to be able to further analyse the data within and across schools. The Trust use the social circumstances of each learner to best predict their outcome in examinations based

on the results from other children in similar circumstances. This data is not currently available for SACRE's.

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

8 SECURING TEACHER ASSESSMENT AT KEY STAGE 3

The Senior Learning Adviser RE (SLA:RE) presented the report (previously circulated).

The report was to consider analysing the results from the moderation process.

WASACRE had been aware of the results and had provided funding for training for all of Wales. The training had taken place on 27th January, in Llandudno Junction. Gavin Craigen, presented the training. The schools presented a portfolio for each level. The portfolios were annotated and sent off to moderators. If there were any issues regarding the portfolios, the moderators would return them to the school. The training event had been well run and had received a positive feedback.

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

9 FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MONITORING OF RE IN SCHOOLS

The Senior Learning Adviser RE (SLA:RE) presented a report (previously circulated) to enable discussion to take place regarding the future arrangements of the monitoring of RE in schools in conjunction with RSEIS.

The SLA:RE currently worked for curriculum support. The SLA:RE would no longer be an RE Adviser under the new system of RSEIS or within his new role of System Leader. The role of System Leader would retain responsibility for religious education, but there would be an increase in the cost to the local authority for curricular support. Set out within pages 2 and 3 of the green SACRE handbook were the SACRE responsibilities. The LEA were, this year, to review the agreed syllabus.

Possibly, under the new service arrangements, the first initial contact with RSEIS would be forwarded to the frequently asked questions (FAQ) document. If the query was not covered under the FAQ then either an email or telephone enquiry could be made. If neither of these processes managed to resolve the issue, then a visit could be arranged. This process had been devised to reduce both staff and travel time.

Within the report was a rationale of a questionnaire together with a questionnaire to be completed by schools.

The SLA:RE clarified that the newly appointed System Leaders would be very well versed in the literacy and numeracy standards within schools. Full training would be given to the newly appointed staff. In terms of support, there could be RE Forums which met twice a year and a drop-in session could be organised once or twice per term.

The RE Quality Mark was to be added as an Agenda item for the next meeting.

Concern was raised as SLA:RE would no longer visit schools and, therefore, knowledge would be lost. A pilot scheme was to take place incorporating the RE Quality Mark.

SACRE had to provide a statutory function. Future meetings would run as they were currently, the only difference would be how the meetings were paid for. The school report would be sent through as usual but discussed within one meeting. The Chairs and Vice-Chairs would become more involved with the correspondence of the Committee.

Discussion ensued and concerns were raised as to the prospective additional work for Chairs and Vice-Chairs as this would have a huge implication. Also concern was raised to the fact that specialist knowledge would be lost.

RESOLVED that the Members received and noted the best way forward in the monitoring of RE in schools.

10 WASACRE

The Senior Learning Adviser RE (SLA:RE) presented the minutes of the previous meetings of WASACRE held on 26 June and 23 November 2012 (copies enclosed).

The SLA:RE confirmed that a verbal report had been presented at the last SACRE meeting on 5 October, 2012, following the WASACRE meeting of 26 June.

The SLA:RE reported that at the previous WASACRE meeting held on 23 November, Jonathan Martin gave a bilingual presentation on the College Merthyr Tydfil which was to become a tertiary college from September 2013. He confirmed that the new college curriculum would offer A/AS level qualifications in Religious Studies and that all pupils would have an RE element to their education, through RE within the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification in tutorials. It had been proposed at the meeting that local SACREs considered appointing a member from Further Education.

SLA:RE confirmed he had contacted the Denbighshire and Conwy Further Education College (Llandrillo College), as he wanted to invite the Chaplain to the next SACRE meeting to explain to the Committee what he could offer SACRE and what SACRE could offer the college.

Regarding Headteacher vacancies on SACRE, nominations were being sought from the Headteachers Federation meeting which was taking place on Monday 4 February 2013.

Wales Association of SACRE (WASCRE) meetings took place three times per year. An additional representative from SACRE was required to sit on WASACRE. The usual process was that the former Chair, current Chair and Vice-Chair were representatives but, as it had been some time since there was a former Chair, a

third representative from the group was required. The forthcoming WASACRE meetings were:-

22 March, to be held in Newport
19 June, to be held in Caernarfon.

Dominic Oakes was nominated but he explained that as he was self-employed, he was concerned about the loss of earnings. Other than that, he was extremely interested in attending the WASACRE meetings.

The SLA:RE confirmed he would make enquiries regarding the loss of earnings.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous WASACRE meetings held on 26 June, 2012 and 23 November be noted and received.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting to take place on 10th June 2013. Venue to be confirmed following confirmation of the dates of the meetings to be held between May 2013 – April 2014.

The meeting concluded at 12.15 p.m.