

FLINTSHIRE STANDING ADVISORY
COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
(SACRE)

Clwyd Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NB
Wednesday 11th October 2017 at 2:00pm

Present

Councillors:

Chris Bithell (**CB**); Paul Cunningham (**PC**); Colin Legg (**CL**); Dave Mackie (**DM**)
(Chair)

Religious Denominations:

Rosalind Williams (**RW**) (Diocese of St. Asaph)

Teacher Associations:

Lyn Oakes (**LO**) (Alun High School, Mold)

In Attendance:

Vicky Barlow (**VB**) (FCC, School Improvement Systems Senior Manager); Phil Lord (**PL**) (GwE, Challenge Advisor), Nathan Evans (**NE**) (FCC, Note Taker)

Agenda Item 1 - Apologies for Absence

Councillor Ian Roberts

Delyth McIntyre

Ibad Hussain

Claire Homard (represented by Vicky Barlow)

Agenda Item 2 - Declarations of Interest: Code of Local Government Conduct

There were no declarations of interest.

Agenda Item 3 – Minutes of Last Meeting (5th July 2017)

RW Amendment requested to change how attendance was reported. RW is a nominee to the committee in place of Sue Jones and should be recorded under the Religious Denominations list.

Resolutions

- (a) RW amendment agreed;
- (b) With amendment in (a), the minutes are approved as a correct record.

Agenda Item 4 - SACRE Draft Annual Report 2016-17

DM Very impressed by the document and thanks PL for the work done to draft the report.

PL Two corrections are required:

- Second paragraph on page 4 of the report should end “2016/17” and not “2015/16”;
- Sixth paragraph also on page 4 should have the word “primary” inserted between “of” and “schools” so that the sentence begins “A small group of primary schools have met...”

CB Pleased that GCSE results are better than the national average and should aim to build on this success.

Resolutions

(a) Draft report accepted.

Agenda Item 5 - Analysis of Inspection Reports

DM Again, thanks PL for work analysing the reports.

PL One correction is required:

- First page, above the table it states “4 schools” but only three are listed in the actual table.

PL Summaries the analysis.

PL enquired whether Estyn should be asked to clarify why there is no mention of Spiritual Moral Social Cultural (SMSC) development at Ysgol Pen Coch, Flint.

PC Enquired why there were no negative comments to which PL responded that Estyn only include comments where necessary so omission of negative comments is a positive.

PC Ysgol Pen Coch should be congratulated on their report.

CB Good to see that Venerable Edward Morgan primary school utilising the relocated library.

Resolutions

(a) Report accepted;

(b) PL to ask Estyn in regards to the SMSC comment for Ysgol Pen Coch

Agenda Item 6 - Response from SACRE's Letter to Schools

PL Explains decision at last SACRE meeting to send a letter to schools promoting statutory duties of schools in light of new curriculum from 2021. Apologies given for sending the letter Voluntary Aided (VA) schools.

RW VA schools were slightly confused as to why they had received the letter. Amendment also requested as the letter refers to “Conwy” instead of “Flintshire”.

PL Original letter sent to Flintshire schools did reference Flintshire. Same letter sent to Conwy schools which has been attached in error. Apologies given.

PL Apologies also given as second letter to secondary schools not translated into Welsh due to annual leave commitments. Responses to the letter indicates that pupils being entered for the full course will halve. Specific Key Stage 4 Religious Education (R.E.) information was requested. Four schools responded:

- Ysgol Maes Garmon, Mold –(Delivering R.E. as intended and in required timeframe);
- Argoed High School, Mynydd Isa – Receiving Religious Education through Welsh Baccalaureate (100 pupils sat the short course in the summer 2017.);
- Alun High School, Mold - Not delivering full or short courses;

- Hawarden High School, Hawarden – 30 pupils currently taught full course in 2 hours a week, all year 10 receive fortnightly lessons covering GCSE material with the possibility of pupils being entered for an exam. Year 11 band A pupils no longer receive RE lesson but instead have drop down days – some will
- PL Kirsty Williams AM, Cabinet Secretary for Education, requesting specific evidence as to the negative impact reporting measures has had on KS4 statutory RE.
- LO Some religious studies are adopting elements of Welsh Bachelorette but it is not being valued.
- VB New measures should be embraced. Level 2 plus capped points score were important which R.E. can contribute to.
- PL No deadline set for responses to the letter sent to secondary schools. Wales Association of SACRE's (WASACRE) concerned of trend nationally not just locally. Specific examples can be sent to WASACRE and NAPFRE meetings in November.
- PL Estyn didn't have any concerns about R.E. being taught by non-specialists. Opportunities for engaging R.E. in another format but there are concerns about the loss of GCSE examinations.
- LO Pupils will receive eight hours maximum this year. Has held one longer session this year linked to English, which was successful and will look to repeat on Ethics and Morals.
- PL Opportunities via Welsh Bachelorette however will reduce uptake of GCSE uptake.
- VB Possibility of engaging exam boards to create a viable exam in line with the Donaldson report.
- PL Discussions have taken place with WASACRE and WJEC.

Resolutions

- (a) PL to provide specific evidence to NAPFRE and WASACRE
- (b) PL to chase up responses from secondary schools;
- (c) VB to remind head teachers to respond at Secondary Heads Federation meeting (w/c 16th October 2017).

Agenda Item 7 - Government Matters

- PL Thanks to RW for writing letter to Kirsty Williams AM on behalf of Flintshire SACRE regarding collective worship. Response from Miss Williams does not say much. Current stance is to retain the status quo with Kirsty Williams unwilling to revise until statutory changes in 2021.
- PL There has been no response from Kirsty Williams AM to the second letter and concerns have been raised at the Lead Practitioners meeting. WASACRE interested in response as jump in specification put pupils off, with a lot more theological rather than applied to current world.
- RW Reiterates that Kirsty Williams intends to retain the status quo.

ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEM – ESTYN QUESTIONNAIRE

- PL Estyn have requested the Chair complete a questionnaire regarding R.E. in schools.

Group discusses questions and potential responses.

Q1. What regular contact does your SCARE have with primary and secondary schools in your area?

A. Schools represented on SACRE. Lead Practitioner Programme have received presentations. Meetings held in schools. Annual Report distributed. Questionnaires sent to schools.

Q2. What support and guidance do you provide for school staff?

A. Very little direct support, tend to follow-up on request. Presence at forum meetings, collaborative working group and there is Local Authority representation in Lead Practitioners Programme.

Q3. Do you feel that teachers have sufficient access to training and support to enable them to teach R.E. effectively?

A. Schools can access externally but not promoted by SACRE.

Q4. Do you feel that there are any issues with non-specialist teaching R.E. in secondary schools? How does this impact on pupil standards?

A. No. Estyn report in 2012 stated that non-specialists do not have detrimental effect on Key Stage 4.

Q5. Do you monitor standards and provision for R.E. in local schools? If yes, in what ways and how often? What are your findings?

A. Estyn reports are examined; analysis of summer term exam results; questionnaires sent to schools.

Q6. Have you considered the impact of Successful Futures in teaching R.E in schools? Do you envisage any issues if R.E. is taught as part of a wider Humanities curriculum at KS3?

A. Received presentation from GwE and WASACRE have provided updates to Pioneer Networks.

Q7. Overall how well do you feel that R.E. is currently being taught in schools? Do you feel that any particular aspect of R.E is more often taught well or taught poorly? What evidence do you base this judgement on?

A. Generally knowledge is well promoted, engagement on key content could be improved. Exam results and numbers of pupils taking them can be used as evidence.

Q8. Do you feel that standards of R.E. in schools have generally improved or declined over the last 5 years? In what ways and why?

A. (general discussion)

Q9. What do you feel are the main issues facing schools?

A. To mention some responses from schools and letter to Kirsty Williams AM.

Q10. Is there any other information you would like to share with us?

A. No.

Resolutions

- (a) PL liaise with DM to confirm responses;
- (b) PL to submit response to Estyn.

Agenda Item 8 - SACRE and School to School Collaboration

PL Summary provided of presentation.

A number of schools met with a focus on planning, developing a one page medium term plan. Feedback received and monitoring sheets were also produced. Area has been created on the HWB website, where papers will be available once translated.

Resolutions

- (a) PL present HWB area at next meeting.

Agenda Item 9 - WASACRE

DM Minutes suggest a very positive WASCARE meeting.

PL Gill Vaisey has produced a report titled "Guidance on managing the Right of Withdrawal from religious Education" which will be a WASCRE document. Some of the items discussed today have already been reported to Estyn. Letter from Manon Jones does not have much content on the curriculum by design. WASACRE and National Advisory Panel for Religious Education (NAPfRE) will present guidance to Pioneer Network.

Agenda Item 10 - Future Meetings

- 2:00pm, Wednesday 21st February 2018 at Nannerch VC Primary School;
- 2:00pm, Wednesday 13th June 2018 at Hawarden Village Church School.

DM Apologies given for not beginning the meeting with Silent Reflection. Everyone is thanked for their attendance.

Meeting ends 3:30pm