

FLINTSHIRE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL
FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)
21 OCTOBER 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Flintshire Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education held at St. Richard Gwyn Catholic High School, Albert Avenue, Flint on 21 October 2015

PRESENT:

Councillors: Chris Bithell, Adele Davies-Cooke, Colin Legg, Dave Mackie and Nigel Steele-Mortimer

Religious Denominations: Gareth W. Jones, Sue Jones, Delyth McIntyre and Rev. Huw Powell-Davies

Teacher Associations: **Ron Keating (Chair)** and Ibad Hussain

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Hilary Isherwood
Dora Jones, Rita Price Yvonne Barker

IN ATTENDANCE:

Challenge Adviser and Committee Officer

The Chair welcomed all those in attendance to the meeting at St. Richard Gwyn High School and asked the Group to undertake a moment of quiet reflection.

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: CODE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONDUCT

No declarations of interest were made.

10. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2015 were submitted.

The Chairman thanked the Committee Officer for her work on the minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

11. SACRE DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15

The Challenge Adviser introduced the draft annual report of Flintshire SACRE 14-15 which had been circulated to members with the agenda.

He detailed the content of the report, which included examination results for Religious Studies Full Course, Short Course and A Levels, and asked members to advise him of any amendments that were required. He noted that the report was shorter than in previous years.

In referring to page 16, the Chairman said that it was gratifying that no complaints had been received by SACRE. He also commented on the positive direction of RE and the role of the local authority and the emerging role of Gwe.

Councillor Chris Bithell queried whether the examination results were for 2013 as shown and in response, Mr. Gareth Wyn Jones said that the results that were reported for Maes Garmon were for 2014. The Challenge Adviser indicated that he would amend the date on the document. Councillor Bithell also requested further clarification on the figures shown under examination results on page 17 which were different to the details provided in the tables on pages 23 to 25.

The Challenge Adviser stated that once the report had been amended, it would be sent to WASACRE to include on their website. He spoke of a three year review that was undertaken by Welsh Government on annual reports and once this had been completed, the findings would be presented to SACRE.

Councillor Bithell also felt that the inclusion of narrative and the consideration of trends analysis would assist with the identification of the number of pupils who had applied for courses in RE and how many schools had put pupils forward for the examinations.

In response to a question from Reverend Huw Powell Davies, the Challenge Adviser confirmed that once the document had been amended, it would be translated into Welsh as WASACRE required the document bilingually.

The Chairman thanked the Challenge Adviser for his work on the annual report.

RESOLVED:

That the draft report be amended as suggested, finalised, published and sent to WASACRE for inclusion on their website.

12. ANALYSIS OF INSPECTION REPORTS

The Challenge Adviser introduced the report on the analysis of inspection reports for six schools inspected under the Estyn framework between February and June 2015:-

Elfed High School, Buckley
Wepre C.P. School, Connah's Quay

Ysgol Derwen, Higher Kinnerton
Ysgol Parc Y Llan, Treuddyn
Hawarden Village VA School
Penarlag CP School

Councillor Chris Bithell felt that the reports were very encouraging and should be welcomed. He suggested that a letter be sent to the schools to congratulate them on the positive outcomes of the reports.

The Chairman commented on the small number of entries relating to Collective Worship but was pleased that no areas of concern had been highlighted, which was positive. Councillor Colin Legg also welcomed the positive outcome of the reports, particularly in the area of Care, support and guidance.

In response to a query from Councillor Bithell about the organisation referred to in the fifth bullet point under Care, support and guidance, Reverend Huw Powell Davies suggested that it was the Agathos Trust. The Chairman commented on the removal of names of individuals or organisations from the reports produced.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be received; and
- (b) That a letter be sent to the schools congratulating them on the positive outcomes of the inspections.

13. RE IN KS3: MUSLIM FOOTBALL PLAYER IN THE PREMIER LEAGUE

The Challenge Adviser provided a detailed presentation on a Religious Education (RE) unit for Key stage 3 on Muslim footballers in the Premier League. He explained that the presentation had been given at a recent WASACRE meeting by Mary Parry on her creation of a unit to particularly tackle the underachievement of boys in RE.

The presentation provided an overview for teachers of how RE skills and aspects of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework could be developed. One of the tasks suggested was for pupils to imagine that they were a football player and devout Muslim and had just joined a Premier League club. The pupils were required to send a letter to explain to their manager about how their beliefs and teachings of the religion would affect the footballer's work at the club. Another task included looking at the number of clubs that were sponsored by gambling associations or payday loan providers and how this would affect the beliefs of the Muslim footballer. This included the requirement for Muslims to give 2.5% of their surplus wealth to charity.

The teaching unit was broken down into nine teaching and learning activity areas and included a number of video extracts, some of which the Challenge Adviser shared with the SACRE members.

The Challenge Adviser explained that Ms. Parry had provided a copy of her presentation and all the accompanying activities and video clips on a dvd and if SACRE members were in agreement, he would send a copy to all schools in Flintshire.

The Chairman welcomed the proposal and suggested that the activities referred to would increase the engagement of boys with RE. He commented on the challenges faced in the teaching of RE.

Mr. Ibad Hussain felt that he could adapt the suggestions in the presentation document for the pupils that he taught and welcomed the excellent resources.

The Chairman thanked the Challenge Adviser for the presentation and endorsed the suggestion to send a copy of the dvd to all schools in Flintshire. He also asked that thanks be passed on to Ms. Parry for her work on the resource.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the presentation be received; and
- (b) That the dvd be sent out to all schools in Flintshire.

14. RE AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The Chairman introduced the agenda item which was to look at the completed resources that were to be sent to all local authority schools. The Challenge Adviser explained that he had sent an email to schools to ask for case studies and had received several responses.

The Challenge Adviser provided a detailed presentation which showed visits to synagogues, churches, the Salvation Army and the other activities that had been undertaken by schools from Flintshire, Conwy and Denbighshire. Pupils from Ysgol Trelawnyd had conducted a pilgrimage to Maen Achwyfan Cross near Trelogan and this had been featured in a local newspaper. A celebration of Religious Education had been held at St. Asaph Cathedral consisting of a series of workshops and an evening presentation. Bangor Cathedral had held an event to highlight the real meaning of Christmas and John Bright School in Llandudno had undertaken an Easter Transition Project. Each year the school also held an annual sixth form RE conference. Activities undertaken by Ysgol Llanbedr were also reported and various case studies from the Agathos Trust were included, such as a Sixth Form half day RE conference on Euthanasia, an annual event known as Explore Easter, and a Friday Forum held each week at Mold Alun School. A list of useful links was also included in the document which provided a link to a list of 10 special places of faith heritage in North Wales and contact details of Hindu Temples, Islamic cultural centres, Jewish Synagogues, Buddhist Centres and Sikh Gurdwara. The Challenge Adviser explained that he had also included a page on the principles for organising and planning visits to

places of worship. He added that the document would be sent to all schools in Flintshire.

Mr. Ibad Hussain spoke of the Mosque in Wrexham and the work that was being undertaken to develop links with school and to encourage visits from schools. The Challenge Adviser commented on the website for the Buddhist Centre in Llandudno and welcomed the ease at which schools could express their interest, through the Centre's website, to undertake a visit. He added that he would include the contact details for the Archbishop Rice Jones Charitable Trust in the 'Useful Links' page.

Councillor Chris Bithell welcomed the sharing of the inspirational document with schools and suggested that highlighting the range and diversity of resources available would increase interest in RE.

The Chairman also expressed his appreciation for the work undertaken by the Challenge Adviser and welcomed the range of activities available. He commented on other opportunities that schools could consider and agreed with the sharing of the document with all primary and secondary schools in the County.

Mr. Gareth Wyn Jones sought clarification on whether details of the Manchester Buddhist Centre could also be included in the document as the centre was specifically set up to educational visits.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the presentation be received; and
- (b) That the document be sent to all primary and secondary schools in Flintshire.

15. EDUCATION MINISTER, HUW LEWIS'S COMMENTS AND THE FUTURE OF RE

The Chairman referred to the letter from the Minister for Education and Skills, Huw Lewis, which had been included in the agenda and which had been sent since the publication of the Donaldson review. He explained that he had been alerted to an email which suggested that Mr. Lewis was recommending that Religious Education be changed to incorporate the teaching of Philosophy and Ethics. The Chairman had raised concern that the proposals would increase tensions on issues of faith and would affect standards in schools. However, the letter had provided clarification and assurance that the Minister was not intending to remove RE from the curriculum in Wales.

The Challenge Adviser explained that the Minister could not dictate to the Local Authority about what they should be suggesting that schools should teach. It was felt that he had been proposing changing RE to Religious and Moral Education (RME) but he was not legally able to do this and it could only

be suggested by Local Authorities and agreed by SACRE as the agreed syllabus. He had made further enquiries about RME and had identified that of the eight aims of RME, only one stated morality.

The Challenge Adviser spoke of a meeting he had attended with John Pugsley and Karen Cornish and said that he had received a subsequent letter from the Minister inviting WASACRE to be a representative on a Stakeholder Group on the design and development of the new curriculum.

Reverend Huw Powell Davies spoke of the concerns that he had raised when he heard about the proposals and the Challenge Adviser explained that it was proposed that consultation would be undertaken with faith groups. He spoke of the importance of approving the content of the agreed syllabus.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

16. SACRE AND SCHOOL TO SCHOOL COLLABORATION

The Challenge Adviser commented that it was understood by teachers that school to school collaboration was a way of sharing good practice. He spoke of SACRE facilitating school to school collaborative groups to support RE teachers across the local authority.

The Chair welcomed the proposals and felt that this would be of benefit to schools. He commended the work that had been undertaken by the Challenge Adviser and spoke of the forums attended by secondary school teachers.

Councillor Chris Bithell was pleased to see that collaboration between schools was being undertaken and he welcomed the sharing of resources which he felt was a great benefit to teachers.

RESOLVED:

That the update be received.

17. WASACRE

- (i) To receive the minutes of the last meeting of the Association held on 25th June 2015 in Mold, Flintshire

The Chairman explained that the meeting of WASACRE had been held at County Hall, Mold. It had been a very successful day and the items that had been discussed had been varied. The Chairman advised that concerns that had been raised on the day were noted but there were no issues from the meeting that required further progression.

Councillor Chris Bithell thanked the Chairman for the choir of pupils from St. Richard Gwyn High School. The event had been very enjoyable and welcomed by all and Councillor Bithell asked that the thanks of SACRE be passed on to the pupils.

The Chairman commented on the concerns raised about the time allocated for RE in schools and spoke of the importance of safeguarding the deliverability of the full and short courses. The Challenge Adviser spoke of the discussion that had taken place at the meeting on whether the Welsh Baccalaureate was having an impact on RE.

- (ii) To agree attendance to the next WASACRE meeting in Blaenau Gwent on 25th November 2015

The Challenge Adviser explained that Gavin Craigen had resigned as Chair of WASACRE and the Challenge Adviser had therefore been asked to undertake the role of Acting Chair.

The Chairman congratulated the Challenge Adviser on his appointment and gave his thanks for the hard work undertaken by the Challenge Adviser.

Councillor Chris Bithell suggested that a letter be sent to Gavin Craigen on behalf of SACRE, to thank him for his work, which included his undertaking of the introduction of the RE short course.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the minutes of the meeting of WASACRE held on 25th June 2015 in Mold be received;
- (b) That the Challenge Adviser attend the WASACRE meeting in Blaenau Gwent on 25th November 2015;
- (c) That a letter be sent from SACRE to Gavin Craigen to thank him for his work.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairman informed members that the next meeting had been scheduled for Wednesday, 3 February 2016 at 2.00 p.m in the Clwyd Committee Room, County Hall, Mold.

Councillor Chris Bithell asked whether it was possible to hold the meeting in another school following the success of this meeting. The Challenge Adviser indicated that he would contact Mold Alyn School to enquire whether it was possible to hold the meeting there. Once the details had been confirmed, the Committee Officer would write to SACRE members to advise them of the venue for the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the date and time of the next meeting be noted;
- (b) That the Challenge Adviser contact Mold Alyn School to enquire whether it was possible to hold the 3rd February 2016 meeting at the school; and
- (c) That the Committee Officer write to the members of SACRE to advise of the venue for the meeting, once it has been confirmed.

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 3.43 pm)

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Chairman