

FLINTSHIRE SACRE
27 NOVEMBER 2013

Minutes of the meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) of Flintshire County Council held at Clwyd Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA on Wednesday, 27th November, 2013

PRESENT:

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

Religious Denominations: Mrs. D. Jones, Mrs. D. McIntyre, Rev. H. Powell-Davies and Mrs. R. Price

Teacher Associations: Mr. R. Keating, Mr. H.E. Jones and Ms. P. Walsh

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: Hilary Isherwood and Carolyn Thomas
Ms. Y. Barker and Ms. S. Jones

IN ATTENDANCE:

Systems Leader and Committee Officer

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: CODE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONDUCT

No declarations of interest were made.

11. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Chairman sought nominations for the position of Vice-Chairman from the Teacher Association Representatives. Mr. Ron Keating was nominated by Councillor Nigel Steele-Mortimer and this was duly seconded. Mr. Keating agreed to the nomination and on being put to the vote, the proposal was carried.

RESOLVED:

That Mr. Ron Keating be appointed as Vice-Chairman until the Summer of 2014 and become Chairman for the academic year 2014/15.

12. URGENT MATTERS

The Chairman indicated that there were no urgent matters for consideration.

13. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2013 were submitted.

Matters Arising

The Systems Leader referred to resolution (b) on page 3 and said that the submission of the Religious Education Quality Framework report had been postponed but would be included on the agenda for the next meeting of SACRE.

Mr. Huw Jones referred to minute 6 on the REC Sponsored Walk and thanked the Committee Officer and Nora Roberts for their work with the administration in the run-up to the event. He said that only a small number attended the walk but it had been a good day. The Systems Leader also gave thanks to Mr. Jones for his work in the organisation of the event.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the minutes be approved as a correct record; and
- (b) That a report on the Religious Education Quality Framework be submitted to the next meeting of SACRE.

14. SACRE DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2012-13

The Systems Leader introduced the draft annual report of Flintshire SACRE 2012-13 which had been circulated to members with the agenda.

Councillor Colin Legg said that his name had been included twice on the list of members on page 19 of the report. He also queried whether the word 'committees' on page 8 should be changed to 'groups'. The Systems Leader explained that the format followed that of previous annual reports and the Chairman referred to the Handbook for SACRE Members in Wales which indicated that SACREs were to be made up of three committees with representatives from Religious Denominations, Teacher Associations and County Councillors. Following a discussion, it was agreed that the word 'committees' not be changed.

In response to a query from Councillor Chris Bithell, the Systems Leader said that Mr. Elwyn Davies had been the Head of Schools' Service at the time of the SACRE meeting in October 2012.

The Systems Leader advised that the data tables of examination results for GCSE, short course and A level were included at pages 21 to 23 of the report.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the amendment suggested amendment to remove one of the entries for Councillor Colin Legg on page 19, the report be received.

15. ANALYSIS OF INSPECTION REPORTS

The Systems Leader introduced the report on the analysis of inspection reports for the following six schools inspected under the Estyn Framework between March and June 2013:-

- Northop Hall C.P. School
- Abermoddu C.P. School
- Ysgol y Llan, Whitford V.P.
- Bryn Deva C.P. School, Connah's Quay
- St. Anthony's R.C. Primary School
- Broughton Primary School

He detailed the positive comments made in key questions 1, 2 and 3 for all six schools and highlighted those made in the areas of Standards; Wellbeing; Learning experiences; Care, support and guidance; Learning environment and Partnership working. He also detailed the one recommendation under negative comments about extending provision for global citizenship across a school.

Councillor Colin Legg expressed concern about the negative comment in the report on the issue of global citizenship which he felt was unfair and he also felt that the subject should be part of civic lessons. Mrs. Rita Price asked if the Section 50 report had been considered as part of the inspection as she felt it would have provided evidence of global citizenship. The Systems Leader explained that historically the RE advisor/systems leader had not been able to look at the Section 50 report so had not been able to include any information from it when undertaking the analysis of a school.

Mr. Ron Keating said that the Estyn reports compared like with like and that Voluntary Aided or Church schools did not fall within the remit of SACRE. He spoke of the function of SACRE and the need of the inspector to create something meaningful for analysis by SACRE. He raised concern that some of the bullet points were not consistent with others in the same section as some were detailed and some were not and said that consideration needed to be given when SACRE viewed the Estyn analysis.

The Systems Leader said that it was possible for SACRE to identify good schools across Flintshire and promote the good practice undertaken by those schools. He felt that schools supporting other schools was important and that if the schools gave their permission then the good practice could be accessible by all schools via a dedicated webpage or spreadsheet. Councillor Bithell said that the Hill report highlighted the importance of support to other schools and working in clusters to share good practice. He also felt that this would be a valuable contribution for schools that were struggling.

Mr. Keating commented on the role of SACRE to promote excellent collective worship opportunities in all schools but raised concern about the varying abilities of teachers to deliver good Religious Education (RE). He felt that a greater challenge was in the Foundation Phase and primary education as schools could not guarantee that teachers would be "specialists" in RE and may not have received the appropriate training in that area. He said that by law, RE had to be taught and that RE specialists varied in degrees of commitment to faith. He said that the quality of RE had to be defined by SACRE in the agreed syllabus and added that this was needed to ensure the best outcomes for pupils. Mr. Keating felt that the sharing of good practice was one of the best ways for schools to improve and feel supported.

Mr. Huw Jones spoke of a Subject Forum that he had arranged and explained that only four or five schools had sent a representative which was poor. He explained that he had set up a sharing Wiki where good practice and resources could be shared and he felt that the role of SACRE was to support RE in schools by helping those that were in need of assistance.

Mr. Ron Keating said that he intended to bring up the issue at the Secondary Heads Federation meeting and that he would express the concerns raised by SACRE. Mrs. Price felt that some schools were clearly under a lot of pressure and said that the more support that schools could be given the better but added that RE teachers were doing excellent work.

The Chairman said that the ideas of the Systems Leader and Mr. Jones for sharing good practice had been supported by SACRE and that the ideas could be combined rather than duplicated. Mr. Jones advised that schools could contact him and he could include them in the Wiki site.

RESOLVED:

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

16. ESTYN REPORT ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The Systems Leader introduced the Estyn report on Religious Education in Secondary Schools.

He also provided a detailed presentation which, he explained, had been presented by a recent WASACRE meeting by Mark Campion from Estyn. The main features of the presentation were:-

- Background
- Main findings
- Recommendations
- Best Practice
- 6 questions for providers

Councillor Chris Bithell welcomed the very interesting and timely report and said that he had seen a significant uplift in the number of pupils taking the subject of Religious Education (RE) to examination level. He referred to the impact that the previous adviser to SACRE, Mr. Gavin Craigen, had had on the subject and the introduction by him of a short course exam in the subject. He said that RE had suffered prior to this but the number of pupils who now took RE and an exam had increased which Councillor Bithell was pleased about.

Mrs. Delyth McIntyre asked where pupils who wanted to undertake RE at 6th form level could study if the course was not offered at their school. The Systems Leader said that there was a consortium of schools which included Hawarden and Flint where RE could be provided. He said that this would mean pupils having to attend a different school for that lesson and could result in a

reduction in the number taking the course even though the opportunities for pupils had increased.

Mrs. Rita Price welcomed the use of the words Religious Education instead of using RE throughout the Estyn report and felt that SACRE should apply the same standard. She also referred to spiritual and moral development and asked if there was any guidance available on the subject to send to schools for staff. The Chairman suggested that it be included on a future agenda for further discussion.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the presentation be received; and
- (b) That guidance on Spiritual and Moral Development be included on a future agenda for further discussion.

17. SACRE MEETING TIMES

The Chairman introduced the item on SACRE meeting times and copies of the responses received to the email sent by the Committee Officer about suggestions for ideas to improve attendance at SACRE were circulated.

He said that from the responses that had been received, the majority of members wanted to keep the start time at 2pm. Councillor Chris Bithell raised concern at the poor response.

The Chairman proposed that the start time for SACRE meetings remain at 2pm and this was duly seconded.

The Systems Leader suggested that the representatives could highlight the issues discussed at SACRE with their own groups and then any comments could be fed back to future meetings of SACRE. He also felt that sharing the minutes of SACRE meetings with their groups would help to improve the value of SACRE. Mr. Ron Keating said that the representatives from each of the three committees that made up SACRE could meet before the SACRE meetings to discuss any issues. Mr. Huw Jones welcomed the suggestion. The Systems Leader concurred and said that this could result in the sharing of good practice and could help to inspire others.

RESOLVED:

That the start time for SACRE meetings remain at 2pm.

18. WASACRE

- (i) Minutes of the WASACRE meeting held on 19th June 2013

The Chairman introduced the minutes of the WASACRE meeting held on 19th June 2013.

(ii) Attendance at the next WASACRE meeting in Caerphilly

The Systems Leader indicated that he would be attending the meeting which was scheduled to be held on 27th March 2014 in Caerphilly. He explained that it was suggested that each SACRE send three representatives to the meeting.

The Chairman indicated that he would try to attend the meeting and Mrs. Delyth McIntyre said that she would submit her name as an attendee but that she may be visiting Uganda in March and would therefore be unable to attend the meeting.

(iii) WASACRE Financial reports

The Chairman introduced the financial reports of WASACRE.

(iv) Vote for the third place on the WASACRE Executive Committee

The Chairman explained that a vote was required to choose Flintshire SACRE's nomination for the third place on the WASACRE Executive Committee due to a tie in votes between Councillor Michael Gray and Reverend Roy Watson.

On being put to the vote, Flintshire SACRE's nomination was for Councillor Michael Gray.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the minutes be received;
- (b) That the three representatives for the WASACRE meeting in Caerphilly on 27th March 2014 be:
 - the Chairman
 - Mrs. Delyth McIntyre and
 - the Systems Leader;
- (c) That the WASACRE financial reports be received; and
- (d) That the Flintshire SACRE nomination for the third place on the WASACRE Executive Committee be for Councillor Michael Gray.

19. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

The Chairman informed members that the next meeting of SACRE would be held at 2pm on Wednesday, 5th March 2014 in the Clwyd Committee Room, County Hall, Mold.

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 3.26 pm)

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Chairman