

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)  
held at Rooms 6 & 7, Innovation House, Wales 1 Business Park, Magor NP26 3DG on  
Friday, 9th June, 2017 at 1.30 pm**

**PRESENT:** County Councillors: L. Brown, A. Easson, M. Lane and J. Watkins

### **ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Church in Wales	-	Dr. A. Daly
Free Church Council	-	Revd. Dr. P. Baines
Bahá'í Faith	-	Mrs. S. Cave
Sikh Faith	-	Mrs. N. Baicher
Teachers Associations	-	Mr. A Jones and Mr. S. Oram
Co-opted Member	-	Mr. T. Thomas

### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Gill Vaisey	RE Consultant
Sharon Randall-Smith	Head of Achievement and Attainment
Richard Williams	Democratic Services Officer

### **GUESTS:**

Welsh Government	-	Ms. M. Jones and Ms. P Smith
Humanists UK	-	Ms. K. Riddick

### **APOLOGIES:**

County Councillors: P. Pavia and A. Webb

R. Cottrell, C. Cooper, R. Davies, S. Sharma, F. Jilani, S. Perry Phillips and M. Millington.

#### **1. Election of Chair**

Due to the low turnout of SACRE Members, it was agreed that the election of Chair for the year should be considered at the Autumn SACRE Committee meeting.

We therefore elected Neeta Baicher as Chair for today's meeting.

#### **2. Appointment of Vice-Chair**

The appointment of the Vice-Chair will be decided at the Autumn SACRE Committee Meeting.

#### **3. Welcome new members and guests**

We welcomed to the SACRE Committee the new SACRE Committee Members and also guests Kathy Riddick (Humanists UK) and Manon Jones and Pauline Smith, representing the Welsh Government.

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Before commencing with the meeting the RE Adviser outlined the role of SACRE, its members and officers including her role as consultant to the Committee.

The Committee was informed that a representative of (Humanists UK) has been invited to join the SACRE Committee as a co-opted representative. The RE Consultant will liaise with Monmouthshire County Council regarding this matter.

A copy of the handbook for SACRE Members in Wales entitled 'So you're joining your local SACRE will be emailed to all SACRE Committee Members and officers who attend SACRE meetings.

#### **4. Declarations of Interest**

County Councillor J. Watkins declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest pursuant to the Members Code of Conduct in respect of agenda item 9 (c) – Summary Inspection report of Archbishop Rowan Williams Voluntary Aided Primary School, as she is the parent of a child attending this school.

#### **5. Confirmation of Minutes**

The minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chair. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The teachers' representative, Mrs. J. Thomas had been replaced by Ms. K. Christofi.
- The RE Adviser has met with Debbie Hartevelde of the Education Achievement Service (EAS) who has indicated that she would be willing for an EAS representative to attend a future SACRE Committee meeting.
- SACRE Members were asked to provide a photograph and pen portrait of themselves to be received by 7<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

#### **6. Feedback on monitoring provision of RE in Primary and secondary schools**

We received a verbal update from the Head of Service Achievement and Attainment regarding the monitoring provision of RE in primary and secondary schools. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The message being received from secondary schools in Monmouthshire is that the curriculum is being delivered. However, it has been difficult implementing the new curriculum.
- From September 2017 officers will be assessing how successful this has been as this will be the first year in which the new specification has been introduced.
- A review, in partnership with the Education Achievement Service (EAS), will be undertaken.

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- It was noted that it was easier for challenge advisers to follow the process through at primary level.
- The EAS needs to be contactable to discuss RE provision in Secondary schools.
- There is a need to work with the EAS across the region.

Having received the verbal update, the following points were noted:

- The RE Adviser informed the Committee that she has a good working relationship with Welsh Government via the National Advisory Panel for Religious Education (NAPfRE). We are very active and proactive with the curriculum. Also, WASACRE has a voice within Welsh Government.
- Concern was expressed that the teaching of RE at Key Stage 4 was being affected due to the Welsh Baccalaureate and may be further affected by the new specification introduced in September 2017.
- The RE Adviser informed the Committee that we have a good working relationship with primary school head teachers. They have been informed by email that the Agreed Syllabus for RE will remain statutory until further notice. This will also be noted in the next Newsbulletin.

We resolved to receive the verbal update and noted its content.

#### **7. Summary Inspection report of Ysgol Y Fenni**

We received the Summary Inspection report and self evaluation report for Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni.

We noted that the school's RE outcomes and provision were excellent.

We resolved that the RE Adviser should write to the Head Teacher congratulating the school on their achievements and thank them for sharing such a detailed and helpful self-evaluation. The RE Adviser would also provide advice regarding the school's indicated areas for development such as a visit to a mosque.

We also noted the positive comments in relation to collective worship.

#### **8. Summary inspection report of Archbishop Rowan Williams Primary School**

We received the Summary Inspection report and self evaluation report for Archbishop Rowan Williams Voluntary Aided Primary School.

We noted the many positive comments regarding the school's RE Outcomes and provision and noted that these appropriately reflected the status of the school as a church aided school.

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It was noted that it is not SACRE's remit to monitor RE in Church Aided Schools. However, it was useful to learn of good practice and offer support where appropriate.

It was noted that the school also received a Section 50 report which was publicly available to view.

We resolved that the RE Adviser should write to the Head Teacher congratulating the school on providing such a helpful and positive self-evaluation report and offer advice in relation to the areas for development as appropriate.

#### **9. Curriculum development update: Feedback on various meetings**

We received a verbal update by the RE Adviser regarding the Curriculum Development. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The RE Adviser had had a very positive meeting with Kirsty Williams AM, Cabinet Secretary for Education, in March 2017 as part of a WASACRE delegation of representatives.
- The Minister had expressed her support for the provision of religious education in schools and that it was a statutory requirement for schools to provide religious education.
- The Minister had stated that if there were some schools that were not complying, she needed evidence as to where this was happening.
- Estyn had also indicated that evidence was required and should also be notified. Estyn would like to be forewarned before undertaking an inspection.
- The Committee discussed how to proceed and it was noted that the situation needed to be managed carefully where schools were not complying with the curriculum. Some suggestions raised were for Estyn to identify any shortcomings via their inspections, and for information relating to any potential shortcomings to be forwarded to WASACRE to be passed on to Welsh Government.
- Concern was expressed that the teaching of RE via the humanities programme might have a detrimental effect on students.
- Some schools were pioneering the way the curriculum may look in light of the Donaldson Review. One of these areas is RE provision being provided via the Humanities programme.
- It was noted that Key Stage 4 RE provision in many schools is becoming marginalised.
- The Minister had agreed that schools did require clear guidance with regard to curriculum development.

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- Curriculum development will be ongoing. Then legislation can be changed to suit the curriculum.
- Manon Jones informed the Committee that a group of pioneer schools have been meeting since January 2017 and had been focussing on the Humanities provision and what the structure might look like. It was still early in the process and the areas of learning were still being worked through. Discussions were being held with WASACRE.
- The National Advisory Panel for Religious Education (NAPfRE) had compiled a document entitled 'What is good RE'.
- Estyn was undertaking a thematic review of Key Stages 2 & 3.
- The Foundation Phase review is being undertaken separately.

We resolved to receive the verbal update and noted its content.

#### **10. Update on Lead Practitioner work to support the implementation of the new Religious Studies GCSE**

We received an update on Lead Practitioner work to support the implementation of the new Religious Studies GCSE.

A network meeting has been organized by the GCSE lead practitioners for 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2017 at King Henry VIII School in Abergavenny commencing at 2.00pm until 4.00pm. Some of the items on the agenda for discussion include:

1. Discussion of options that schools have chosen with perhaps the grouping of schools together that have chosen the same religion combination so that they can support each other.
2. Preparation of SAMs to create a bank of SAMs materials to share, such as a selection of papers and mark schemes that can be used as examples, tests and assessments.
3. Tracking progress by discussing mechanisms to track progress and identify under achievement.
4. Cost effectiveness by going paperless, as far as possible. Consideration of creating its own resources.
5. Specified texts activities, similar to the SAMs activity to provide activities to help students understand and apply the specified texts.
6. Schemes of Learning – layout, sharing of ideas, division of tasks to create schemes of learning.

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The Lead Practitioner was able to work with schools directly by visiting schools for one day every two weeks.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

#### 11. Training event for SACRE Members on learning about each others' faiths

We received details of a SACRE Members' Training Day to learn about each other's faiths.

The Committee was informed that the Education Achievement Service (EAS) had expressed an interest in supporting such an event and making it available to schools across the consortium. Estyn, and the Welsh Government representatives present at today's meeting also expressed support for such an event.

The RE Adviser stated that she would email the SACRE Committee members with some potential dates for the training day, with a view to taking this matter forward.

#### 12. Draft minutes from the WASACRE meeting on 3rd March 2017

We received and noted the WASACRE minutes dated 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2017.

#### 13. Photo presentation of the meeting hosted by Monmouthshire

We received an interesting and informative photo presentation of the WASACRE meeting hosted by Monmouthshire SACRE on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2017.

#### 14. nominations made to the WASACRE Executive Committee

We were informed that there were two nominations for two positions on the Executive Committee, namely: Alison Lewis and Gill Vaisey.

We were also informed that nominations had been received for the position of vice-chair for the Wales Association of SACRE's (WASACRE), namely: Ernie Galworthy of Merthyr Tydfil SACRE and Gill Vaisey of Monmouthshire SACRE.

The Committee nominated Gill Vaisey to become the next vice-chair of WASACRE.

#### 15. Dates of future WASACRE meetings

Details of the next WASACRE meetings are as follows:

- 7th July 2017 – Wrexham.
- 10th November 2017 - Bridgend.

#### 16. Spring 2017 News Bulletin

We received and noted the Spring 2017 SACRE news bulletin.

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### **17. Draft bulletin for Summer 2017**

We received the draft SACRE news bulletin for the Summer 2017.

The RE Adviser informed the Committee that items for the news bulletin should be emailed to the Democratic Services Officer who would then forward the items on to the RE Adviser.

### **18. Information briefings from members for inclusion in the next SACRE News Bulletin**

Sue Cave provided an item for the SACRE Summer news bulletin:

- October 2017 is the bicentenary of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith.

The RE Adviser will add this information to the news bulletin.

### **19. Next meeting**

We resolved that the Democratic Services Officer would liaise with the RE Adviser and the Education Adviser to ascertain a date for the next meeting at the end of October / beginning of November 2017.

**The meeting ended at 3.26 pm.**