Minutes of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) held in Rooms 6 & 7, Innovation House, Wales 1 Business Park, Magor. NP26 3DG on Friday, 13th October, 2017 at 1.30 pm

PRESENT: Chair: Mrs. N. Baicher (Sikh Faith)


ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Church in Wales - Dr. A. Daly
Free Church Council - Revd. Dr. P. Baines
Hindu Faith - Mr. S. Sharma
Teachers Associations - Mr. A. Jones
                           Mr. S. Oram
                           Ms. K. Christofi
                           Ms. C. Cooper
                           Ms. S. Perry-Phillips
Co-opted Member - Ms. K. Fitter

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Gill Vaisey RE Consultant
Richard Williams Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

Mr. R. Cottrell, Major N. Andrews, Mrs. S. Cave, Ngakpa Namgyal Chatral, Mrs. R. Davies, Ms. M. Millington and Mr. T. Thomas

1. Election of Chair

We elected Neeta Baicher as Chair.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chair

We appointed County Councillor L. Brown as Vice-Chair.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

4. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 9th June 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chair subject to a minor amendment to minute 16 – remove ‘and noted’ from the sentence.
Arising from the minutes, the following points were identified:

- In response to summary inspection reports and self-evaluation reports in respect of voluntary aided schools, it was noted that a good relationship existed between the local Authority and the schools. It was customary for the RE Consultant, on behalf of the SACRE Committee, to write to the head teacher of all schools in Monmouthshire that have received a positive Estyn inspection/self-evaluation report. However, with regard to voluntary aided schools, the Diocesan Director of Education, Dr. Annette Daly, would receive a copy of the letter.

- Pen Portraits yet to be received should be emailed to the Clerk to SACRE by Friday 20th October 2017.

- Rhian Davies is the Lead Practitioner supporting the implementation of the new Religious Studies GCSE and had been appointed by the Education Achievement Service (EAS). A network meeting had been held in June 2017 where various religions were discussed. In response to a question regarding the new GCSE, it was noted that the course is being taught but would not be examined until the summer of 2018. The new course has significant context change which is a challenge for teachers. Rhian Davies had also created a Christianity and Hindu textbook. On behalf of the SACRE Committee, the Chair congratulated Rhian.

- The Chair stated that the faith communities would support the Lead Practitioner with regard to the implementation of the new Religious Studies GCSE.

- Rhian Davies, along with other Lead Coordinators, had attended a WJEC meeting. The EAS had asked Rhian Davies to work with West Monmouthshire Comprehensive School and Newport High School to provide support with regard to the RE A Level course.

- In response to a question raised, it was noted that the WJEC website provides copies of past RE papers in respect of GCSE and AS level, as well as providing legacy specifications.

- There has been positive sharing of resources between lead practitioners and GwE, the fully bilingual School Effectiveness and Improvement Service for North Wales. Details will be available in the SACRE newsletter.

- The RE Consultant will be providing a SACRE training event in the new year.

5. **Feedback from a presentation to Cardiff SACRE: RE Days for Year 6 Pupils in Monmouthshire Schools**

The RE Consultant provided the SACRE Committee with feedback from a presentation that she had made to Cardiff SACRE regarding RE Days for year 6 pupils in Monmouthshire’s schools.
In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Monmouthshire SACRE has an excellent reputation across Wales. A contributing factor is due to the range of faith representatives that sit on the SACRE Committee. Faith representatives actively support Monmouthshire’s schools via events such as the RE Days for Year 6 Pupils.

- Cardiff SACRE had asked that a presentation be made to their SACRE in respect of this event. The presentation was made by Soam Sharma, Revd. Dr. Peter Baines, Neeta Baicher and Andrew Jones.

- The RE Days event provides a number of workshops whereby pupils can learn about different faiths.

On behalf of the SACRE Committee, the Chair thanked the RE Consultant for her presentation and looked forward to more of these events being held in the future.

6. To consider and approve the draft SACRE Annual Report 2016 - 2017

We received the SACRE Annual Report dated 1st August 2016 to 31st July 2017.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The report needs to be adopted by SACRE before it is forwarded to Welsh Government.

- In response to a question raised regarding guidance on managing the withdrawal of pupils from RE, the RE Consultant informed the Committee that the document has been translated into Welsh and was at the design and print stage. When printed, the document will be sent to all schools in Wales with a view to looking to sell the document further afield. The document will support schools and also provide guidance to parents. The document incorporates all major faiths and Christian denominations. SACRE members will be able to view the document when it is complete.

- The report to be amended as follows:

  - Mr. R. Williams Clerk to SACRE.

- Inspection reports and self-evaluation – In response to a comment in that there had been no reference made to Religious Education in Estyn Inspection reports, the RE Consultant informed the Committee that since 2010, with the implementation of the new Estyn Framework, it had not been within the remit of Estyn to comment on individual subjects. However, the RE Consultant would incorporate into the SACRE Annual Report the concerns raised regarding this matter.
MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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- Attendance at WASACRE Meetings – it was noted that each SACRE has nominated representatives to attend WASACRE meetings. However, if a nominated representative is unable to attend a WASACRE meeting then a substitute from the Committee may attend. The host SACRE may invite all of its SACRE Members to attend.

- Chair of SACRE:
  - Former County Councillor Hacket Pain had been Chair of SACRE for nine years.
  - Reference was made to the wording in the document under paragraph 2.6, the sub heading - Chair of SACRE.

    It was proposed by County Councillor L. Brown and seconded by County Councillor P. Pavia that the wording ‘totally committed’ be removed from the document.

    Upon being put to the vote, the following votes were recorded:

    In favour of the proposal - 3
    Against the proposal - 8
    Abstentions - 2

    The proposition to remove the wording ‘totally committed’ was not carried.

    We resolved that the wording ‘totally committed’ should remain within the document.

We resolved to adopt the draft SACRE Annual Report 2016-2017 and to include the points raised, as identified in this minute.

7. Curriculum development update

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

- The good working relationship with Welsh Government is continuing.

- The RE Consultant and her peers have attended a number of Pioneer School meetings.

- The Welsh Government has commissioned a comprehensive paper regarding Pioneer Schools, written by NAPfRE and WASACRE. The paper, reflected on what is good RE and making reference to spiritual development, had been submitted a week ago and had been sent to the Pioneer Schools.

- Examples of progression have been looked at from ages 3 to post 16.
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- The RE Consultant and her peers have been invited to present to the Pioneer Schools at a convention on 13th and 14th November 2017.

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

- Concern was expressed that Religious Education was being incorporated into the Humanities area of the curriculum, which could lead to the teaching of RE being weakened.

- Concern was expressed that the Donaldson report had had a negative impact on the teaching of Religious Education in Scotland. It was noted that measures were being put in place to ensure that similar issues relating to the provision of Religious Education does not occur in Wales.

8. Draft minutes of the WASACRE meeting dated 7th July 2017

We received the draft WASACRE minutes dated 7th July 2017.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- An Estyn representative had suggested that there was a need for teachers to have training about religions from meeting with faith representatives.

- Estyn had submitted a questionnaire to SACRE’s across Wales for completion.

- Some SACRE members expressed concern that a request had been made by Humanists UK for one of its representatives to sit on Monmouthshire SACRE. Other SACRE members stated that the purpose of the SACRE Committee was to advise on Religious Education and that as Humanism is a part of the curriculum, a representative of Humanists UK should be invited to join the SACRE Committee. A Member of the SACRE Committee considered that a representative from Humanists UK was not legally entitled to sit on a SACRE Committee as she considered that Humanism was a belief and not a religion. However, this statement was challenged by the RE Consultant who informed the Committee that whilst a Humanist UK representative could not join the SACRE Committee with voting rights, a representative could join the Committee as a co-opted member. Currently, the Committee has two co-opted member posts on Monmouthshire SACRE, which are occupied. However, the SACRE Committee can request that a report be presented to Full Council to consider increasing the number of co-opted member places from two to three, on Monmouthshire SACRE Committee, which would allow for a Humanist UK representative to join the Committee.

9. To note the appointments made to the WASACRE Executive Committee

We noted the appointments made to the WASACRE Executive Committee.
10. **Future WASACRE meetings**

Future WASACRE meetings will be held on:

- Friday 10\(^{th}\) November 2017 at the Civic Centre, Bridgend.
- Friday 9\(^{th}\) March 2018 at the Civic Centre, Swansea.

11. **September 2017 News Bulletin**

We received the September 2017 SACRE news bulletin.

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

SACRE Members were encouraged to forward any items that they might have for the next SACRE news bulletin to the RE Consultant.

Future news bulletins will be prepared via a shared process in which support will be provided via another RE Consultant.

Items received for the next bulletin include:

- An update from Sue Cave.
- St. David’s Cathedral Visits.
- RE Ideas.
- An article from the Chair, Neeta Baicher.

13. **To agree dates and venue for future meetings**

The next meeting will be held at Innovation House, Magor on Friday 9\(^{th}\) February 2018 at 1.30pm.

The meeting ended at 3.40 pm.