

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of SACRE held
at Rooms 6 & 7 Innovation House Magor on Tuesday, 15th November, 2016 at 1.30 pm**

PRESENT: County Councillor E.J. Hacket Pain (Chair)

County Councillors: A. Easson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Roman Catholic Church	Mr. R. Cottrell
Buddhist Faith	Ms. S. Khandro
Teachers' Associations	Mr. A. Jones, Ms. S. Perry-Phillips, Mr. S. Oram
Co-opted Members	Ms. K. Fitter, Mr. T. Thomas

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors: P. Clarke, J. George, D. Jones and B. Strong

Mrs. V. Howells, Revd. Dr. P. Baines, Mrs. S. Cave, Mrs. F. Jilani, Mrs. N. Baicher and Ms. M. Millington

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

2. Confirmation of minutes

The minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 10th June 2016 were confirmed and signed by the Chair subject to the following amendment:

Page 5, agenda item 13 – SACRE News Bulletin, first bullet point:

Children from Monmouth Comprehensive School had visited Auschwitz and Krakow in Poland which had proved to be a very moving experience for teachers and students.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- A teacher representative advised the Committee that the correct version of the RE Levels within the Incerts Programme were now highlighted in bold.
- The Goytre Fawr Primary School RE Day had been included in the RE Newsletter.
- SACRE Committee's nominations for the WASACRE Executive Committee had been successful, namely, Mary Parry, Huw Stephens and Mathew Maidment.

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- Curriculum Review – WASACRE had recently provided feedback on its view regarding progress in respect of the development of the new curriculum. It was noted that partnership working with schools was expected. Teacher representatives expressed concern that schools were not being kept up to date with regard to developments.
- A response was being awaited from the Education Achievement Service with regard to the invitation that had been extended inviting representatives to attend a SACRE Committee meeting.

3. Feedback from the RE Day at Caldicot School (school evaluation forms and responses from pupils)

We received feedback from Caldicot School regarding the RE Day that was held on 28th June 2016.

SACRE Members were pleased with the results of the event as many positive responses had been received. Pupils had taken part in and experienced different workshops and had gained valuable insight into various faiths.

We thanked the RE Adviser, teachers and the faith representatives for their involvement.

4. Training event for faith representatives and teachers - sharing faith provider workshops

We agreed that the RE Adviser and the Head of Achievement and Attainment would consult with primary school head teachers about the possible demand for a training event for faith representatives and teachers around the theme 'sharing faith provider workshops'.

5. Get recognition for your SACRE

The RE Adviser informed Members that Monmouthshire SACRE had been invited to apply for the 2017 Accord Inclusivity Award, which seeks to reward SACRE's that work hardest in their area towards boosting the growth of inclusion, cohesion and mutual understanding between those of different religions and beliefs. The Chair had decided to apply for the recognition and would complete the application form on behalf of the Committee.

6. Presentation regarding WASACRE collation of survey responses from schools

We received a presentation from WASACRE, presented by the RE Adviser, regarding the new Welsh Baccalaureate and RE. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- 16 out of 22 SACRE's were able to send in returns from their schools.
- 70 schools in total completed the survey.

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Responses to the following questions were received:

Q1. Since the implementation of the new Welsh Baccalaureate, does your school provide statutory Religious Education according to the Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE at Key Stage 4?

10 schools said no (14%).
60 schools said yes (86%).

40 schools provided details to support their answer.

Q2. Since the implementation of the new Welsh Baccalaureate, does your school offer a Religious Studies GCSE qualification as one of the supporting qualifications for Welsh Baccalaureate at Key Stage 4?

11 schools said no (16%).
59 schools said yes (84%).

28 schools provided details to support their answer.

Q2.a) If yes, is the RS GCSE course taught within: a) Core RE time (for all Key Stage pupils), b) Option only, c) other?

32 schools (46%) said a) Core RE time.
21 schools (30%) said b) Option only.
11 schools (16%) said c) other.

29 schools provided details to support their answer.

Q3. Has the new Welsh Baccalaureate had more of a positive / negative or no impact on RE?

47 schools (67%) said no impact.
11 schools (16%) said positive impact.
12 schools (17%) said negative impact.

1 school provided details to support its answer.

SACRE Members were surprised by the figures.

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Q4. How has the new Welsh Baccalaureate had a positive effect on RE in your school?

Q5. How has the new Welsh Baccalaureate had a negative effect on RE in your school?

20 negative responses (40%).

28 positive responses (60%).

Q6. Do you require any support from your local SACRE?

8 schools (11%) said yes.

53 schools (76%) said no.

9 schools (13%) gave no answer.

23 schools provided details to support their answer.

We resolved to receive the presentation and noted its content.

7. Advice from Welsh Government on non-compliance of RE

We received a letter regarding advice from Welsh Government to SACRE's on non-compliance of RE requirements in light of the new Welsh baccalaureate.

Welsh Government had been asked at a WASACRE Executive meeting to confirm what action could be taken by SACRE's in the event of a school or schools within their local Authority, that, as a result of the new Welsh Baccalaureate qualification are currently not meeting their statutory requirement for Religious Education in Key stage 4.

The advice given was as follows:

- In the first instance, SACRE's are advised to formally inform / advise the local authority.
- If the situation remains the same and the school or schools involved continue to not meet the statutory requirement for RE, SACRE's are advised to inform the Wales Association of SACRE's.
- WASACRE is advised to write to the local authority involved to advise / remind them of their duty.
- WASACRE is advised to pass the information on to Welsh Government.

We resolved to receive the information and noted its content.

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8. Situation in Monmouthshire schools

We received a verbal update on the situation in Monmouthshire's schools. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Each of the four secondary schools have a different approach to the provision of RE alongside the Welsh Baccaulaureate.
- Two schools are currently fully complying with the requirements to provide RE.
- One school is not fully complying with statutory requirements to provide RE for all pupils as some pupils only have RE as an element of the Welsh Baccaulaureate.
- One school is still in the process of determining how it will provide for RE alongside the Welsh Baccaulaureate.
- Some Schools are confident of meeting the required measures whilst others are not.
- Uptake for the full RE Course at GCSE is high.
- There is high uptake at A Level for subjects linked to RE.
- In one school (Year 10) there is an option to take RE at Key Stage 4, then at Key Stage 5, but the situation is reviewed annually.
- The Welsh Baccaulaureate is now established.
- Some schools are confident of meeting the required measures.
- It is heartening to see that there is a good uptake for RE.
- There is a statutory requirement to provide RE provision up to post school education. Concern was expressed that the Welsh Baccaulaureate might not be able to provide full RE provision.
- Monmouth School has attempted to support RE provision by integrating it into the Welsh Baccaulaureate curriculum but it has been difficult to achieve as there has been pressure put on non-professional staff having to prepare students for GCSE qualification. It is difficult to achieve full RE provision in the time available.
- It was necessary to recognise the position that school were being put in.
- The Head of Achievement and Attainment stated that she would take back the issues raised and discuss with the schools concerned.
- Caldicot School has fought to divorce RE provision from the Welsh Baccaulaureate and has designated time in Year 10 for RE Provision. RE provision is taught by specialists.

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Having received the verbal update and the views expressed, we resolved that the Chair and the RE Adviser would prepare a letter to be shown to SACRE members before being sent to Kirsty Williams AM, Cabinet Secretary for Education, outlining the SACRE Committee's concerns. A copy of the letter would also be sent to WASACRE.

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

9. WJEC accredited RS Specification

We received the WJEC accredited Religious Studies specification which meets the GCSE Qualification Criteria to be taught in Wales from September 2017.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The specification contained a heavy emphasis on Christian concepts and theology.
- It was too heavy and systematic and there was a fear that students might not enjoy the course which in turn, might affect take up of the subject.
- It will be difficult to achieve via the RE short course.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content and will monitor the take up of the course and pupils' achievements in future examinations.

10. Local Authority grant to support non-core subject teachers with new GCSE specifications - feedback on current developments

We were informed that the NAPfRE group has been advised that Welsh Government has made available to each Consortia funding to support non-core subject teachers in working together to prepare for the new GCSE specifications.

The Head of Achievement and Attainment stated that she will follow this matter up with the EAS.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

11. Judicial Review of the Religious Studies GCSE in England

We received the following information:

- Response to High Court Ruling from Dr. Satvinder Juss on Religious Studies GCSE and including non-religious views in RE.
- Guidance documentation produced by the British Humanist Association.
- Response from the Department for Education in England.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

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- The document referring to the High Court ruling on Religious Education is not an official document. The author seems to be promoting the inclusion of Humanism in school studies.
- The document entitled 'Supporting Schools in Teaching Humanism' is an educationally sound document and refers to a useful website with concrete teaching materials contained within it. Resources for teachers are being provided.

We resolved to receive the documentation and noted the content.

12. Draft minutes from WASACRE meeting 23rd June 2016

We received the minutes of the WASCRE meeting held on 23rd June 2016. In doing so, the following points were noted:

Guidance on managing the right of withdrawal from Religious Education

The guidance would help parents if they have withdrawn or were thinking of withdrawing their children from RE provision. The document has been out for consultation and positive responses have been received. Support from faith groups has also been good. The document will be published and made available to all schools.

We resolved to receive the minutes and noted its content.

13. Preparations for hosting WASACRE 3rd March 2017

We received the preparation check list for hosting WASACRE on 3rd March 2017. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Gwent Music will provide some musical entertainment on the day.
- A combination of primary and secondary schools will also provide musical entertainment.
- A display board of Monmouthshire SACRE members will be available. This could be extended to include faith displays.
- Rooms have been booked and refreshments will be provided.
- Heads of RE in Monmouthshire schools are invited to attend.
- The Chairman of the Council has also been invited to attend.

We resolved to receive the update and noted its content.

14. Draft Annual Report 2015 / 2016

We noted the draft annual report 2015/16.

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15. Monmouth Comprehensive School Self Evaluation report

We received the Monmouth Comprehensive School self-evaluation report.

The school had indicated an excellent / good rating in respect of the key questions outlined in the report.

It was noted that the Key Stage 5 information had inadvertently been omitted. This information would be provided by Sharon Perry Phillips.

We resolved that the RE Adviser should write to the Head Teacher congratulating the school on producing a good self-evaluation report.

16. Kymin View Primary Self Evaluation report

We received the Kymin View Primary School self-evaluation report and it was noted that the school had produced a detailed and positive report.

We resolved that the RE Adviser should write to the Head Teacher congratulating the school on producing a good self-evaluation report.

17. SACRE News Bulletin draft Autumn 2016

We received the draft Autumn 2016 SACRE News Bulletin. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The News Bulletin will be finalised and available from the end of November / early December 2016.
- The draft Annual Report 2015/16 could be made available via a weblink.
- The Buddhist Faith representative will write an article for the News Bulletin regarding fundraising for a rural retreat in rural Wales.
- Two faith schools have been inspected.
- Section 50 training will shortly be held.
- The Roman Catholic Church representative will write an article for the News Bulletin regarding a retreat that he had attended recently at Llantarnam Abbey.
- Simon Oram will write an article for the News Bulletin regarding the Faith Day that was held at his school.
- Information regarding Holocaust Memorial Day 2017 will be outlined in the News Bulletin.
- Information regarding Farmington Scholarship opportunities 2017-2018 will be outlined in the News Bulletin.

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We resolved to receive the News Bulletin update and noted its content.

18. Dates and venues of meetings for 2016 / 2017

The next meetings of the SACRE Committee are as follows:

Friday 10th February 2017 at 1.30pm – Innovation House Magor.

Tuesday 23rd May 2017 at 1.30pm – County Hall, Rhadyr, Usk.

The meeting ended at 3.25 pm