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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)
held
at Remote Meeting on Friday, 26th June, 2020 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: COUNTY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES:

County Councillor R. John (Chair)
County Councillor T. Thomas
County Councillor P. Pavia

FAITH REPRESENTATIVES:

Revd. Peter Baines
Mrs. S. Gooding
Major N. Pryor
Dr. L. Brown
Mr. A. Szwagrzak
Mrs S. Cave
Dr. A. Daly

TEACHER REPRESENTATIVES:

Mrs. M. Millington
Mrs S. Hamer

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Wendy Barnard	Democratic Services Officer
Paula Webber	RE Adviser
Sharon Randall-Smith	Head of Attainment and Achievement

APOLOGIES:

County Councillor A. Webb, Revd. P. Baines, Mrs K. Wilding and N. Jenkins

1. Minutes of the previous meeting held on Friday, 13th March, 2020 at 10.00 am and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th March 2020 were confirmed as a correct record subject to the following clarification:

Item 4: It was confirmed that it is the responsibility of the Local Authority to adopt the agreed syllabus as proposed by the agreed syllabus conference (which may or may not include representation from SACRE members). The local authority has the option to accept or refuse the agreed syllabus.

Item 5: It was clarified that it is the role of the Local Authority to monitor provision and standards in schools. SACRE monitors GCSE results to offer advice, not to monitor.

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2. Public Open Forum

No members of the public requested to speak.

3. SACRE Membership update

County Councillors (6)	
R. John	
T. Thomas	
P. Pavia	
A. Webb	
M. Lane Vacancy	Reminder to be sent to Group Leader
J. Watkins Vacancy	Reminder to be sent to Group Leader
Representing the Church in Wales (1)	
Dr. A. Daly	
Representing the Roman Catholic Church (1)	
A. Szwagrzak	
Representing the Free Church Council (4)	
Dr. L. Brown (Methodist Church)	
Suzanne Gooding (Presbyterian Church/ Baptist Church)	
Revd. Dr. P. Baines (Baptist Church)	
Nick Pryor (Salvation Army)	
Representing the Baha'i Faith:	
Mrs. S. Cave	
Representing the Buddhist Faith:	
Ngakpa Namgyal Chatral	Difficult to attend meeting in Usk. As much prior notice of meeting dates requested
Representing the Hindu Faith:	It was suggested, in respect of the vacancies for faith representatives, that contact could be made with the Inter Faith
Vacancy	
Representing the Jewish Faith:	
Vacancy	
Representing the Muslim Faith:	

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Vacancy	Network to seek suitable nominations.
Representing the Sikh Faith:	
Vacancy	
Representing Teachers Associations (7)	
Vacancy	Professional associations advised of vacancy
Mr. N. Jenkins	
Ms. C. Smith	
Ms. K. Wilding	
Ms. K. Christofi	
Ms. M. Millington	
Mrs. S. Hamar	
Co-opted Members (2)	SACRE discussed the vacancies for two (non-voting) Co-opted Members. Existing members were requested to contribute suggestions of suitable persons. SACRE also considered representation/input from learners. It was noted that the Chair can invite anyone to a meeting to make presentations etc. and that this may be a possible way to identify suitable persons for co-option.
Vacancy	
Vacancy	
R E Consultant	
Paula Webber	
Representing Chief Officer, Children and Young People	
Sharon Randall-Smith	

4. Curriculum update: RE supporting framework

The RE Adviser provided an update on the RE curriculum and supporting framework due to be brought in from September 2022. The Minister has notified that the curriculum is disapplied due to COVID 19 and consequently, schools are not required to teach RE, and the curriculum

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generally. Where possible, schools are encouraged to work towards the new curriculum together with a focus on wellbeing.

It was agreed that the draft supporting framework should have been shared with SACREs and schools before the general consultation to enable a more comprehensive response from professionals and SACREs. It was agreed to write to the Minister to ask that the framework is made available for consultation response from SACREs and schools before the general consultation.

5. Professional Learning for RE/RVE update

An update was provided that WASACRE was due to meet with EAS about professional learning for the new curriculum but that meeting will be rescheduled. The need to ensure specific funding for professional learning for RE in the new curriculum was agreed. A professional learning community of heads of RE and teachers has been set up. EAS has provided playlists to upskill teachers on digital learning to enable them to deliver learning online.

RE teachers and practitioners were invited to make training requests. NAPFRE is looking at training for professional advisers and Clerks to SACREs and is considering support for teachers.

6. Monitoring Provision and Standards - Monmouthshire School Inspection Reports and Self-Evaluations (tabled at the meeting)

SACRE considered Estyn and self-evaluation reports for Goytre Fawr Primary School and Thornwell Primary School. Both reports were made confidentially available to members, at the meeting only. There were positive aspects demonstrating high standards, as summarised by the RE Adviser. Development points will be a focus for improvement going forward. For example, there was concern that in one instance there was some misinterpretation of the self-evaluation form identifying a possible point for professional learning in the future.

The detail included was welcomed

The Estyn reports contained no recommendations for RE or collective worship. There were no comments regarding spiritual development e.g. identification of opportunities that could be developed to enhance current practice.

A point was raised about outdoor learning and this was agreed to have potential for professional learning; schools will be asked to make nominations for a working party.

It was commented that there may be some confusion about mandatory teaching of RE in non-faith schools. More liaison between schools was suggested to share good practice. It was suggested that secondary learning network and the same for primary schools could be set up to promote collaborative working.

It was reiterated that it would be the preference of SACRE to hold a meeting in a school at some point in the future.

Letters of Congratulations and support were requested for the schools concerned.

7. GCSE/GCE examinations during the Covid-19 pandemic

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Due to COVID 19, this year's exams are cancelled. SACRE expressed sadness that pupils in Y10 and Y12 will not get the results they deserve.

The RE Adviser has compiled work for Y11 pupils taking RE which has been circulated nationally. SACRE was concerned that learners have access to support. WJEC webinars are available. No decisions on the future have been made so far. With regard to future qualifications, it has been emphasised that RE is a statutory subject and that it is a learner's human right is to have a qualification available if they study a course.

SACRE also wished to ensure that grades are awarded equivalent to what the learner was likely to have achieved. It was acknowledged that these are concerning and uncertain times for learners.

8. Learning Network Schools for Humanities - update

It was explained that previously EAS had learning networks for different subjects. That funding will be allocated to Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE). Lead practitioners are currently being appointed for all humanities subjects. The RE Adviser can work with schools for RE and setting up virtual communities for support will be beneficial especially now. Heads of Humanities will need a certain level of understanding of all the subjects and so be able to fully support RE in that.

SACRE expressed concern that RE has an equitable split of the funding for resources and training and questions were asked about the mechanisms in place to ensure equity. There was reassurance in understanding that professional staff will address each element equally. It is up to schools to decide the approach and the five Humanities subjects all need to be visible. As learners move to progression steps 4 and 5, they will need to be more aware of differences between the subjects.

It was pointed out that the role of SACRE role is to advise the LA. If concerns are raised and Professional Learning is needed, SACRE can request that the LA procure the necessary resources/training from the EAS.

9. Welsh Government consultation on Legislative proposals for religion, values and ethics (attached)

The draft consultation response was circulated to SACRE Members yesterday. Members were given opportunity to make comments prior to compilation of the final version being submitted.

It was commented that the faith community and faith schools wished to retain the subject as RE as there would be less problems for faith schools and trust deeds. There was concern that equal time would be allocated to religious and non-religious views. The draft will be amended to reflect Members' comments. Whilst the curriculum has been disapplied, it was presumed that collective worship would continue e.g. virtually by class or groups to assure social distancing. WASACRE has circulated guidance and innovative ideas to schools for collective worship and wellbeing.

Some concern was expressed about alternative names other than RE which could potentially undervalue RE.

Members were urged to take some time to read the draft response and send any further comments in by e-mail for inclusion in the final version.

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10. WASACRE business

- i. WASACRE Advice to Schools in Wales on Collective Worship during the Covid-19 Pandemic: SACRE received the information.
- ii. Other Business: Despite the current restrictions , WASACRE has been busy with many consultation meetings, writing letters, updating the SACRE handbook, working parties and providing support for RE
- iii. Election for Executive members and Vice Chairperson for WASACRE Executive Committee:

Following an election in which the three groups voted, it was agreed that Monmouthshire SACRE's vote for membership of the WASACRE Executive Committee would be for John Meredith and Heather Hanson and Jennifer Harding – Richards (job share).

Dr. Louise Brown left the meeting during consideration of the vote for Vice Chair of WASACRE.

Monmouthshire SACRE's vote for Vice Chair of WASACRE went to Dr. Louise Brown.

Dr. L. Brown re-joined the meeting.

- iv. WASACRE Website and Social Media update: It was noted that the WASACRE website is being redesigned and a Facebook profile is to be established. WASACRE is trying to build a following on Twitter – Members were invited to follow and retweet @WASACRE
- v. Dates of future WASACRE meetings and confirm representation: Due to COVID 19, the Spring WASACRE meeting was cancelled and the summer meeting postponed.

11. To confirm the date of the next SACRE meetings for 2020 - 2021

Meeting dates to be arranged.

The meeting ended at 12.10 pm