

Minutes



Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

Date: 8 March 2017

Time: 10.00 am

Present:
LEA reps Councillors D Williams (in the Chair)

Officers: V Thomas (RE Consultant), A Powles (Assistant Head of Education) and J Howells (Democratic Services Support Officer)

Faith Groups: N Baicher (Sikh), S Sharma (Hindu) and H Stephens (Baptist)

Teacher Reps: N Huggleston (NASUWT), s Northcott (NUT) and H Vaughan (NAHT)

Apologies: Councillors G Giles & C Jenkins, C Aabid, C Comely, G Davies, S Hunt, P Landers, K Mabbott, J Crawley and K Hicks

1 Welcome and Presentation from Bassaleg School

SACRE members were welcomed to the Year 7 morning Assembly. The readings and prayers were made by four year 7 pupils. The Headteacher, Mrs Thomas, made a presentation on the 'theme for the week' which was charity. Pupils had been researching charity statistics in readiness for their choice of charity for fund raising. There were over 500,000 official charities in the UK raising in the region of £52 billion each year. Mrs Thomas reminded everyone that charity and help could also be given in the form of time and acts of thoughtfulness and not solely money. There was also a great deal of satisfaction to be had when helping people, not only by the recipient of the good deed but also the giver.

Agreed: That a letter of thanks be sent to the head teacher for hosting the SACRE meeting.

2 Time of Quiet Reflection

Members took part in a period of quiet reflection.

3 Apologies for Absence

As noted above.

4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were submitted

Agreed:

That the Minutes of the SACRE meeting of 9 November 2016 were accepted as a true record subject to the following amendments:

That the spelling of H Stevens be amended to H Stephens.

Item 11 GCSE RS Update: N Huggleston confirmed that St Julians had lost the full course in year 10 and not the short course.

Item 13 WASACRE: WASACRE AGM took place at Rhyl, not Rhys as stated.

5 **Holocaust Memorial Day 2017**

The theme for this year's annual event was "How can life go on?" and people from across the country were asked to think about "what happens after genocide and of responsibilities in the wake of such a crime".

Newport City Council held a service at St Woolos Cathedral officiated by the Venerable Jonathan Williams. Pupils from Caerleon Comprehensive school, St Josephs High school, Rougemont and Langstone Primary school had a particular role in the service and in addition pupils from 23 Newport schools attended. Approximately 350 were at the service including local dignitaries.

Those who were present at the service agreed that the service was very well attended and it was pleasing to note the amount of young people who were at the service. The event has grown from humble beginnings and now appears on many school calendars.

6 **Matters Arising**

All actions points agreed at the November meeting had been carried out.

7 **Analysis of Examination Results-Summer 2016**

V Thomas went through the analysis of the religious studies results for GCSE full course, GCSE short course, A level and AS level. She confirmed that each school would have received their own school examination results and this would be discussed within the school. The analysis gave a summary of the 2016 results in comparison to the previous two years, the Consortia and the All Wales figure. The analysis also included the cohort percentage which had not been included in previous years.

GCSE full course: This course is generally taken by pupils who have chosen to take RE in their options.

The number of schools entering for this course remained the same as 2015 but the number of pupils entering had increased. 2015 results were exceptionally high as a benchmark so results at all grade boundaries were below 2015 results but comparable with 2014. Results were also better than Consortia figures at all grade boundaries but below All Wales figures.

GCSE short course: Entry figures for 2016 had dropped below the previous two years although the same number of schools had entered. Cohort entry was significantly better than both the Consortia and All Wales figures. A*-A grades were better than 2015 and better than the Consortia and All Wales figures. A*-C and A*-G grades were below previous performance of 2015 and 2014 whilst better than the Consortia at A*-C and A*-G and better than the All Wales figures at A*-C and comparable with at A*-G.

It is compulsory for pupils to take RE at KS4 hence most pupils not taking the full course will take the short course which gives the pupils the opportunity for accreditation for their KS4 study. However, more able pupils are encouraged to take the full course in the short course time allocation. Some pupils are entered for 2 short courses and these results are reflected in full course figures.

Members voiced their concern that if the short course was not available to pupils they would have to do the required statutory RE at KS4 which amounts to one hour a week, the content of which most pupils do not find interesting and there is no qualification on its completion. It was noted that almost half of the pupils in Newport schools were taking either the short course or full course. A total cohort of 84% for both courses were leaving schools with a qualification in RS.

A Level: Entry figures and number of schools entering had increased in 2016. A*-A results were significantly down on 2015 results but comparable with 2014. They were below the Consortia and All Wales figures. A*-C results were comparable with both 2015 and 2014 and higher than Consortia and All Wales figures. A*-E results continued the excellent performance of previous years at 100%, slightly better than the Consortia and All Wales figures.

AS Level: There was a slight drop in entry numbers from 2015 although the number of schools entered remained the same. A grade results were comparable with 2014 and Consortia figures but below 2015 and the All Wales figures. A-C results were comparable with Consortia figures but below previous performance and the All Wales figures. A-E results were comparable with previous performance and better than Consortia figures but below the All Wales figure of 89%.

Members were reminded that schools losing the short course GCSE at KS4 could affect the take up of students for A and AS level courses. The data only included results which had been cached in by pupils not going on to do A level otherwise it could result in data being double counted.

Agreed:

V Thomas to draft a letter to all Newport secondary schools enclosing the analysis which would be forwarded to all secondary schools.

8 **GCSE Consortia Arrangements**

The A/AS approved specifications, training programme and courses were already being taught from September 2016 and the GCSE level specifications have been approved and in place for first teaching from September 2017.

The WJEC had provided 4 free CPD training sessions in February designed for teachers preparing to teach the WJEC GCSE RS spec A and B from September 2017.

V Thomas gave a rundown of the actions being taken by the ERW and EAS Consortia with regards to the GCSE support programme. Both consortia had kept WASACRE and SACRE updated on actions being taken to support the GSSE programme.

EAS have secured two curriculum leads in this area - King Henry VII (Rhian Davies) and Ebbw FAWR LC (Clare Lane) who will be setting up a network meeting on 28 June.

A discussion ensued on the new examination specifications with the following points being raised:

- It was agreed that the new specifications for GCSE and A/AS level were particularly heavy on content but all schools were in the same position and it was encouraging schools to share resources.
- Present day teachers had not been trained in a lot of textual content in RE and might therefore find it difficult to teach pupils in the new examination specifications which were once again reverting to textual content in the new syllabus.
- Whilst specialist teachers could take the time to learn what is required of them to teach the new syllabus it was not ideal for non-specialist teachers
- Agreed generally that the new syllabus should be monitored and a review be carried out in the future to receive feedback from teachers.

- It was agreed that EAS curriculum leads would be invited to update SACRE on their support work at its Autumn meeting and also WASACRE hope to receive an update on progress from all Consortia in South Wales at its Autumn meeting in Bridgend. If possible, SACRE teacher representatives from the secondary sector would be asked to make every effort to be in attendance to make contributions to the meeting.

Agreed:

The report was discussed and noted.

9 National Curriculum Review & Assessment: Update

WASACRE representatives had been present at regular stakeholders' meetings with Welsh Government to discuss the new curriculum.

NAPfRE had drawn up a draft document outlining some guidelines on *What makes good RE* which had been submitted to Manon Jones of Welsh Government to share with pioneer schools working on the Humanities areas of learning and experience (AoLE). WASACRE had suggested that someone who specialises in RE teaching explain the document to the pioneer schools.

V Thomas outlined the timescale for the curriculum review.

- Pioneer School launch 17/1/17
- Humanities AOLE meeting with Manon Jones 18/1/17
- Pioneer schools will meet to discuss the way forward with their AoLE in February/ March 2017.
- The first expected output is expected to be a set of principles which demonstrate how the Humanities AoLE links with the 4 purposes for the curriculum.
- The second output is likely to be the specifics and detail of the AoLE
- The third output is likely to be when separate disciplines work alone or together- perhaps forming sub groups or focus groups

A copy of the Curriculum for Wales newsletter for January 2017 (a WG stakeholder newsletter) was contained within the report together with a list of schools working on the Humanities AoLE.

As a primary school headteacher H Vaughan confirmed that the school would adjust accordingly to what they needed to do to teach the new curriculum but as a multi ethnic school this would not be so difficult for them to do.

There was concern from non-Pioneer schools that only the Pioneer schools seem to be aware of the present status of the review. H Vaughan referred to an EAS awareness raising session with schools to be held to update them on progress in the Pioneer Network.

Agreed:

The report was discussed and noted.

10 Annual Estyn Remit

The Annual Estyn Remit sets out the Cabinet Secretary for Education's annual remit to Estyn which is additional to Estyn's core business of inspections.

The remit requested by Welsh Government included the following specific advice:

- a) issues where Estyn is asked to provide detailed reports and other resources drawing on evidence from thematic inspections;
- b) working groups that Estyn is asked to support;

- c) other areas where WG may request advice and support; and
- d) follow up activity on the inspection of the regional education consortia for school improvement which took place in 2016.

SACRE were informed of the intention to conduct a thematic review of RE at KS2 and KS3 by Estyn. V Thomas informed members that NAPfRE and WASACRE representatives are seeking to secure a meeting with Estyn to discuss the scope and intentions of this thematic review and also seek their advice and support regarding schools that may not be fulfilling statutory requirements.

Agreed:

The report was discussed and noted

11 SACRE Website/SACRE Awards

Despite a long process involving time and effort by the Officers and Consultant to SACRE the application by Newport SACRE was unfortunately unsuccessful on this occasion.

A letter had been received from Paul Pettinger, the Accord Coalition Coordinator, acknowledging the good work being carried out by GEMS and events such as HMD and the annual Roma Festival but also confirming that Newport had been unlucky in its application for an Inclusivity Award.

Although the bid was unsuccessful V Thomas had taken the opportunity to populate the GEMS and SACRE website with various documents making it easier for schools to access and it was suggested that both websites be viewed as part of the agenda in the Autumn SACRE meeting.

Agreed:

The report was noted

12 WASACRE Issues

Feedback from the meeting in Carmarthen November 2016

Both V Thomas and H Stephens had represented Newport at the meeting.

Much of what was contained in the WASACRE minutes had already been discussed by SACRE although V Thomas did draw everyone's attention to the update from Gill Vaisey on the Guidance on Managing the Right of Withdrawal from RE. The document is presently out for consultation with various organisations, faith representatives and educationalists. It is hoped that the document will be available in the Summer Term.

Feedback from the meeting in Usk March 2017

V Thomas, N Baicher, S Northcott and H Stephens had all attended. The meeting had included several presentations on the role of the pioneer schools on the Humanities AoLE. There was also a presentation by Manon Jones of Welsh Government on the NC review.

Representation at WASACRE meeting in Wrexham July 2017

H Stephens agreed to represent Newport at the meeting. V Thomas may also be able to attend.

Executive Voting

There are currently two vacancies on the WASACRE Executive Committee. However, as Newport already have a representative on the Executive (H Stephens) they were unable to nominate anyone further.

Agreed

Clerk to inform WASACRE of those attending the Wrexham meeting in July.

13 **Correspondence**

As agreed at the Autumn meeting letters had been sent to Newport schools regarding Statutory Requirements for RE in state maintained schools. This was to alleviate any confusion as to the status of agreed syllabuses in schools as the curriculum was being reviewed.

Schools were sent a copy of the current Newport agreed syllabus for RE which contained the programme of study for Foundation phase and KS2 (primary school) and KS4 (secondary schools).

Eight of the nine Newport secondary schools and 25 of the 38 primary schools had replied. All those who replied confirmed they understood the statutory requirements for RE at all key stages.

Agreed:

A Powles to chase up the one secondary school who had not responded .
Clerk to send out another reminder to primary schools

N Baicher reminded those present of Commonwealth Day taking place on Monday 13 March and services were being held throughout Newport to celebrate the event.

With no further matters to discuss the meeting ended. Cllr Williams thanked everyone for attending and for their input.

Date of next meeting

14 June 2017 at St Patrick's Catholic Primary School