

Minutes



Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

Date: 14 June 2017

Time: 10.00 am

Present: Councillors I Hayat, R Hayat, L Lacey and J Watkins

Officers: M Dacey (Head of GEMS) – In the Chair, V Thomas (RE Consultant) and J Howells (Democratic Services Support Officer)

Faith Groups: P Landers (RC) & H Stephens (Baptist)

Teacher Representatives J Crawley (ATL) and S Northcott (NUT)

Apologies: Councillor G Giles, N Baicher, N Huggleston, S Hunt, K Mabbot, L Picton, S Sharma and H Vaughan

Martin Dacey took the Chair

1 Welcome by St Patricks RC Primary School

Each member of SACRE was greeted personally by a pupil of the school and escorted into the meeting room.

SACRE members were welcomed to the school's act of collection worship. The assembly was led by the Headteacher, Lindsay Smith. The assembly included input from a large number of individual pupils in addition to the school as a whole. All pupils responded enthusiastically to the singing and also Mrs Smith's questions into how Jesus could be let into their hearts.

At the end of the service all SACRE members were handed a card thanking them for attending the assembly. The card contained a short verse dedicated to St Patrick together with a St Patrick's charm.

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

2 Welcome to new SACRE Members/Roles and Responsibilities of a SACRE

Councillors Laura Lacey, Rehmaan Hayat and Joan Watkins, having been elected to Newport City Council on 4 May 2017, were welcomed to SACRE as new members. Information on the roles and responsibilities of SACRE was circulated to those present.

3 Time of Quiet Reflection

Members took part in a period of quiet reflection.

4 **Apologies for Absence**

As noted above.

5 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were submitted

Agreed:

That the Minutes of the SACRE meeting of 8 March 2017 were accepted as a true record subject to the amendment of two typographical errors which included amending King Henry VII school to King Henry VIII school under item 8.

6 **Matters Arising**

All action points agreed at the March meeting had been carried out.

Schools had previously been sent a letter together with a copy of the current Newport agreed syllabus for RE for them to confirm that statutory requirements for RE at all stages were being delivered. An updated list showed that all 9 secondary schools and 26 of the 38 primary schools had replied to the letter. It was agreed that a reminder be sent to those primary schools which had not responded.

7 **Schedule of Meetings 2017-2018**

The following dates were agreed for SACRE meetings for the coming academic year. All meetings will commence at 10am.

Autumn meeting – 17 October 2017. This is a business meeting and will take place at the Civic Centre, Newport

Spring meeting – 14 February 2018. Caerleon Comprehensive have kindly agreed to host this meeting

Summer meeting – 14 June 2018. This meeting will take place at a Newport primary school.

Agreed:

Clerk to inform SACRE members of the agreed meeting dates.

A Powles to identify a Newport primary school for the Summer meeting – Maes Ebbw special school was suggested.

8 **Membership Report**

Church in Wales: Now that Jared Nolan had left the authority a replacement representative would need to be found.

Salvation Army: although Major Comely had left Newport new replacements were expected in August when they would be approached to sit on SACRE.

Muslim: Mr Aabid had not been in attendance for quite a while. The Clerk had sent both an email and letter to him but had received no reply. A new Muslim representative would therefore need to be sourced.

NUT: Linda Stevens had stood down from SACRE but NUT and ATL would be amalgamating as a Union later this year and therefore no replacement would need to be found for her as S Northcott (NUT) and J Crawley (ATL) would continue to attend.

Agreed:

A Powles to follow up on a replacement for the Church in Wales vacancy.

Clerk to approach the Salvation Army for the vacant position

Clerk to liaise with Newport City Council's Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator regarding Muslim representation at SACRE meetings

9 Revised Criteria for GCSE and GCE specifications: Update

EAS have appointed two lead practitioners to support schools with the implementation of the new Religious Studies GCSE specifications to be taught from September 2017. They are:

- Rhian Davies – King Henry VIII
- Clare Lane - Ebbw Fawr LC

A network meeting has been organised for 28 June, 2017 at King Henry VIII School in Abergavenny, NP7 6EP. A letter had been sent to all Newport secondary schools encouraging them to sign up for the meeting (see item 13 on the agenda).

Funding has been secured for Rhian Davies to continue for the next academic year 2017/18. There is an intention to hold one network meeting per term. There is also an expectation that the GCSE lead will go out to schools to support where necessary.

As had happened at previous meetings, a lengthy discussion ensued on this topic;

- the new specifications for GCSE and A/AS level were particularly heavy on content and present day teachers had not been trained in a lot of textual content in RE.
- schools in Wales were having to rely on Hodder, the English text book for RS, as no text book for Wales was available as yet.
- VT confirmed that whilst no text book was available the lead practitioners were producing material which was available on the HWB website and the WJEC were also populating their website with material.
- It was agreed that teachers were highly likely to refer online for support.
- VT agreed to raise the issue of support material at the WASACRE Summer term meeting.

Several queries were raised regarding the continuation of the short course. VT confirmed that the short course would continue in Wales which was not the case in England. The 2017 entry numbers for the short course would be available at the Spring 2018 meeting when exam results and entry numbers were compared over the past three years.

Agreed:

The report was discussed and noted.

10 National Curriculum Review and Assessment: Update

Following the publication of Professor Donaldson's report '*Successful Futures*' WASACRE representatives had been present at regular stakeholders' meetings with Welsh Government to discuss the new curriculum.

Items discussed included:

- a. Relationship between the locally agreed syllabus, the statutory requirements and the new curriculum.
WG agreed to investigate what had happened with the Foundation Phase during the last curriculum review to avoid the same thing happening again.
- b. Working together to develop the RE aspect of the Humanities Area of Learning & Experience

A draft timeline for the development of the AoLE was provided by WG and it was agreed that SACREs and WASACRE needed to be involved in the development of the curriculum.

c. Other matters which may impact the curriculum reform process :

- RE for nursery children – under the Successful Futures report the AoLE would be statutory from the age of 3. Currently RE is provided from reception onwards. WG felt that this distinction between RE and other subjects of the curriculum could be addressed
- Post 16 Religious Education – this would need further consideration as Professor Donaldson's review only covered up to age 16
- Managing withdrawal from RE – with RE being included in humanities there was a need to clarify the procedure of withdrawal from RE following a parent's request.
- Relationship between the new curriculum framework and qualifications – there was concern that the new RS GCSE appeared to be at odds with proposals contained in Successful Futures.

Welsh Government have commissioned Eleanor Rawling to write a paper on the Welsh Curriculum Review. She was present at the AoLE meeting in May to outline her recommendations. Teachers were asked to form subject groups in order to identify one big idea which could be developed like the Science 'Big Ideas'.

It was felt that the current curriculum was too rigid and Professor Donaldson's report has to be more flexible.

Agreed:

The report was discussed and noted.

11 Estyn Update

VT reported back on the very positive meeting which had taken place with Estyn on 5 June 2017.

The meeting had been arranged following the news that Estyn were conducting a thematic review of RE at KS2 and KS3. Clarification was sought by SACRE on the form of this thematic review. Agenda items were as follows:

1. The thematic review of Religious Education at KS2-KS3.
 2. Current inspection of RE – Meeting statutory requirements according to an agreed syllabus for Religious Education.
 3. KS4 RE.
 4. The new Estyn Inspection Framework from September 2017 and RE.
- Estyn confirmed that 20/21 schools would be identified mainly from evidence of previous visits by HMI.
 - Estyn would be looking at standards of achievement, provision, links with communities and staffing (whether specialist or non specialist teachers).
 - Estyn confirmed that any non fulfilment of statutory requirements for RE would be referred back to the school.
 - The delegation had pointed out to Estyn that when looking at secondary school inspection reports there were no specific comments made regarding RE unlike in primary reports. Estyn agreed to bring this point to the attention of their inspectors.
 - There was also concern about some schools believing that following the Global Citizenship module of the WBQ was sufficient to address agreed syllabus requirements. Estyn were informed that this would not be the case. RE sits outside the national curriculum and the syllabus is therefore determined by the Local Authority which also monitors that statutory requirements are being met. There were

also reports that some schools were using registration and 'thought for the day' as part of its delivery of RE and believed that would meet statutory requirements when it does not. Estyn agreed to alert its inspectors to this issue.

12 **WASACRE Issues**

Feedback from Spring meeting at Usk

This meeting had been very well attended by Newport representatives with N Baicher, S Northcott, H Stephens and V Thomas all attending. The main issues of that meeting have already been addressed in this SACRE meeting.

Representation at Summer meeting in Wrexham

V Thomas confirmed that she would attend. S Northcott also hoped to be available to attend.

Executive Voting

Nominations for the position of Vice Chair: Newport nominated G Vaisey

Nominations for Executive Committee: Newport nominated both A Lewis and G Vaisey

Agreed:

Clerk to inform WASACRE of those attending the summer meeting in Wrexham

VT and SN have delegated powers to place Newport's nominations to the Executive at the summer WASACRE meeting.

13 **Correspondence**

The letter to secondary schools regarding the network meeting in Abergavenny on 28 June as previously mentioned in item 9.

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