

# Minutes



## Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

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Date: 18 October 2018

Time: 10.00 am

Present: Councillors L Lacey (Chair) and J Watkins, E Keen, P Webber, S Hunt, P Landers, H Stephens, N Baicher, L Picton, C James, N Barnett

Apologies: Councillors I Hayat and T Holyoake and N Huggleston

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### 1 Minutes, actions and matters arising from last meeting held on 14 June 2018

The minutes of the previous meeting were submitted. Item number 9 – CPD for RE Teachers in Secondary Schools was briefly discussed, L Picton advised teachers had been collaborating to support each other and will develop new materials for the new GCSE course.

#### **Agreed:**

The minutes of the SACRE meeting of 14 June 2018 were accepted as a true record.

### 2 SACRE Membership - To consider membership vacancies

To receive an update on the SACRE Membership. Clare James, representing Humanist UK, was welcomed to the Committee as a new member. It was clarified that her membership would fall under Committee A. The Salvation Army and Methodist positions were still vacant as no replies had been received to emails sent.

Emma Keen, Head of GEMS, was welcomed to the Committee as replacement for Martin Dacey as the LEA representative, alongside Nerys Wherry.

There were concerns voiced about the lack of representatives turning up to the SACRE meetings. Would the Committee be able to write to regular non-attendees? The Chair agreed that after 3 meetings of non-attendance, then the Chair would contact them.

In regards to Inter-Faith meetings, N Baicher explained that the Faith representatives say that the lack of attendance is proving difficult.

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Comment was made that there is a greater responsibility to ensure RE teachers are here for meetings, especially due to the nature of changes in syllabus. It was advised to the Committee that meetings are open to the public to attend, and any observers can participate through the Chair.

S Hunt advised it is hard for herself and Joanne Crawley to both attend the meeting due to cost implications, as it is more cost effective to the school if one of them attends the meeting.

Paula Webber then asked the Committee if they would be happy for letters to be sent to organisations to seek out new members, which was accepted.

**Agreed:**

The clerk to contact Education team to discuss cost implications for J Crawley and S Hunt to attend.

The clerk to also provide names of non-attendees to the Chair.

**3 SACRE Annual Report 2017-2018**

The Committee considered the SACRE Annual Report 2017-2018, which was written by V Thomas. The report highlighted issues including the Locally Agreed Syllabus, Standards and Methods of Teaching, Advice on Collective Worship as well as Holocaust Education and ESTYN Updates.

It was advised that Vicky Thomas wrote the annual report, and if there are any changes needed to let Paula Webber know within a week. Then it can be sent off for Welsh translation.

It was explained that this academic year most SACRE's need to legally agree the new syllabus at an Agreed Syllabus Conference. This would need to be checked for Newport. When it was queried that it was thought that endorsement of the new syllabus would be delayed, Paula told the Committee that the current syllabus would carry on until the new syllabus.

Concern was raised that there could be a situation where Religious Education would be going back to a statutory subject without no qualifications. Paula told the Committee that Vicky Thomas had sent letters to schools to advise that grade syllabus should be followed until the new syllabus is brought in. The current agreed syllabus should be followed if not doing short course. Reminders had been sent to schools in the past academic year to ensure that schools were meeting the statutory requirements for religious education at Key Stage 4. Schools must follow the locally agreed syllabus. Members discussed whether another reminder should be sent out. SACRE discussed the options of schools to choose full and short courses in Religious Studies at GCSE. Schools are required to make choices of which course to deliver in light of the changes to specifications and the point scoring systems for accountability. The Chair suggested that schools could be contacted to see whether they are doing the short course or following the full course syllabus and also see whether if there is any support they would like to have from SACRE.

**Agreed:**

The Members of the Committee noted the Annual Report. If there are any changes needed, then to let Paula know within a week. Then it can be sent off for Welsh translation.

To write to schools and ask what they are currently teaching in Key Stage 4 RE, and to offer SACRE support.

#### 4 **Roles and Responsibilities of SACRE members**

The SACRE Members were given an outline on the main functions that SACRE undertakes. The following was highlighted;

What is Religious Education  
What Happens in Religious Education?  
Religious Education and the Curriculum –  
Local Responsibility  
The broad role of SACRE:  
Composition of SACRE  
The Role of SACRE  
Agreed Syllabus  
The responsibilities of the LA in respect of SACRE  
Impact of Successful Futures on RE  
What can SACREs do to become more effective

Members discussed whether timing of SACRE meetings were a factor and that attendance would be better in an evening. If meetings being held at Civic Centre were later in the afternoon then school teachers would only require cover for a short time. The meetings held in schools would remain in the mornings. The Chair suggested adding an agenda point for the next meeting to see how attendance could improve.

Suggestion was also made that SACRE members could visit school's to attend Collective worship and visit RE departments to introduce themselves. Members could observe what the school is doing for RE and explain the support that SACRE can offer. Councillor Watkins advised a number of the Councillors in the Committee are School Governors, so they could visit schools and report back to SACRE. Paula advised that there is a need for every school to know what SACRE is and what the Committee does. Suggestion was then made to formalise a process. It was also advised that articles could be placed in the news bulletins with examples of good practice shared across EAS. If permission was given from schools, then articles from learners and pupils could be put in the news bulletin.

The Faith Representatives advised they are happy to give time, and advised the Committee that Merthyr Council are providing an RE day, with one schools making a lot of invites. The Chair made comment that the Inter-Faith Network was an interesting aspect to see how different religions are developing within Wales. SACRE could offer support to schools to develop understanding of religious diversity.

Comment was made that others who visit the schools require a DRB check, so schools need to inform SACRE of this. The Chair then advised to add an agenda point for the next meeting for on the effectiveness of SACRE and what can be developed moving forward. LP suggested that they could trial a visit in Caerleon Comprehensive with Cllr Watkins to see an assembly in action. The Chair agreed and advised letters sent from the Chair could be sent to all schools. A timetable could then be created and sent to members. PL advised that doing this would be for SACRE's own benefit, and explained that there very good practice being shown in the Church Schools. This good practice could be shared in community schools.

#### **Agreed:**

The report was noted.

Add as an agenda point for the next meeting to discuss the effectiveness of SACRE and what can be done moving forward.

Send email appointments to schools regarding visits. Send list of schools that accept to the Chair/Paula to arrange a timetable for visits.

## 5 Curriculum Development Update

SACRE Members were updated on the Curriculum Development. It was explained that Welsh Government held a meeting with SACRE's in September, which N Baicher and N Wherry attended. Paula advised that slides would be provided to the Committee.

Paula advised that Welsh Government want to consult with SACRE's on the proposed idea that will be supporting the new framework in Religious Education. A group of people, some of whom have had involvement in writing the Humanities curriculum will be writing a supporting framework for RE that Welsh Government will fund. Paula advised that Welsh Government have engaged the services of herself and Libby Jones, who is the Chair on NAPfRE to head up the team. If SACRE's agree for this to go ahead then Paula and Libby will work with Welsh Government once a week. It is hoped that the framework will be adopted or adapted by SACREs as the locally agreed syllabus.

NB advised that there was a presentation from Professor Graham Donaldson, which created interesting discussions. Paula told the Committee that she can show the video in a future SACRE meeting. Paula also advised that she met with the Professor the day before the meeting who confirm he would be at the next Humanities workshop. He is very supportive of Religious Education. Paula made comment that she believes RE will be stronger and more present in schools as it sits alongside other subject within Humanities and links with other subjects such as Science. Links between RE and Health and Well-Being are also easily identifiable. The copy of the questionnaire on page 89 had been included for Newport SACRE to complete.

Once the final version is received, a response is needed by SACRE, what are its views? Would the Committee support the framework and what are the implications of the proposals, such as training for implementation? Paula asked the Committee for any views, and to pass on any comments to her by next week. The Chair advised the Clerk to send the questionnaire to the all the Committee but for Teacher Representatives to fill out the questionnaire.

HT queried what was specifically going in the final version, as in the report comments were made that there weren't clear hooks in some material for RE specialists. Where in the lessons is the RE component going to be? Clear instructions are needed, mustn't be left with verbage. Paula stated there is a cultural change, and not the curriculum that we are used to. It would be down to the schools to determine their own curriculum She then clarified that it was feedback that disciplines been strengthened, it might come in the knowledge and skill section. The thought is that it would move to a more specialist provision when children are 14-16. It was reminded that this is a draft document and things will be changed.

Comment was made that at some point we have to agree on an agreed syllabus based on the new framework but how could it be agreed if the hooks can't be found. Councillor Watkins then asked what would be the impact for children e.g. in exams, where would it leave children when they are faced with exam papers. LP advised that schools are working together to ensure everything is being done right, don't want children to leave with worse results. SH advised that there is problems with the level of engagement with children, with what motivates and interests them. Praise was then given of how RE is being taught at Monnow Primary School. The problem was that unless engagement is kept up the children will become disengagement when they reach High School.

Paula advised an holistic approach was taken when writing the whole curriculum so that there is no significant overlap anywhere. Teachers would need support in understanding the

philosophy of the curriculum and support in knowing how to implement it. SH made comment that facts need to be known, and living in an age of technology you don't need to know facts where you can go online and find them out. Children could be given some broad themes and asked what they'd like to be taught. What one class will be may differ to another but teachers would know what skills to teach them. This would help engage with the children.

**Agreed:**

The report was noted.

To send out the curriculum survey to the Committee and to get feedback from Teacher representatives.

**6 Estyn Thematic Report**

A synopsis of Estyn's Thematic Report on Religious Education at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage was outlined. The report was intended for the Welsh Government, headteachers and staff in schools, local authorities and regional consortia, and members of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs). The report's findings will also help to inform the development and implementation of the new Curriculum for Wales.

**Agreed:**

The SACRE Members were informed of the development.

To include as an agenda item for the next meeting to discuss and draft a SACRE action plan.

**7 SACRE News Bulletin**

The SACRE News Bulletin was discussed, it was explained it is aimed to provide schools with examples of things sharing good practice, highlighting important issues links to websites so RE co-ordinators and Headteachers can have a better idea of what is going on and get more support. It was also discussed that SACRE members could contribute to articles on what they are currently doing. Paula advised Kathy Riddick sent a report called "What is Humanism", which Paula will collate. The bulletin would try to be released termly although this isn't always possible as there may not be enough articles, but will be sent as often and necessary as possible.

**Agreed:**

The Committee were informed of the News Bulletin.

**8 Monitoring Provision and Standards - RE and Collective Worship inspection reports and School self-evaluation**

The SACRE Members were presented with a report for School Inspections. The purpose of the report was to provide information about spiritual development, collective worship and any comments made in relation to religious education in the inspection reports of the schools inspected in the local authority during 2017-2018.

Paula advised there were no recommendations for RE and collective worship. It was suggested that SACRE write to schools that had been inspected to see if they could share their self-evaluation reports and to offer support as Paula can now visit and support schools through her role as Adviser. An example was given of one school that didn't have any recommendations made but may need more support from SACRE.

It was asked if inspections had been suspended until 2020. Paula advised the Committee that there is no news currently. When she spoke to Estyn it was a legal requirement to inspect but there had been no decision made yet.

It was suggested that the Committee would prefer the analysis of inspection reports on an as and when necessary basis, as it would be more effective to pick up on any recommendations straight away.

**Agreed:**

To write to schools, congratulate them on their good work, offer support and ask if they could share their reports.

## 9 **Update on the Withdrawal from RE survey**

The Committee were given an update on the Withdrawal from RE Survey. Results of the National Survey had recently been received. Newport's results were:

73% of schools responded to the survey.

There had been 3 schools with 3 families fully withdrawing 4 children from RE, with reasons being that they are Jehovah's Witnesses.

There had been 7 families partially withdrawing 11 pupils from RE, with reasons being that the families are Jehovah's Witnesses and do not wish for their children to participate in any activity that promotes celebrations of other religions, Unwillingness for children to learn about other religions and not wanting their children to take part in the celebration of Christmas.

It was then advised that WASACRE were going to be feeding back analysis for the whole country. Welsh Government are interested in the number of withdrawals from RE

**Agreed:**

To accept the update on the Withdrawal from RE survey.

## 10 **Holocaust Memorial Day 2019**

The Committee discussed the next Holocaust Memorial Day which will take place on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2019. The theme for 2019 is 'Torn from home'.

'Torn from home' encourages audiences to reflect on how the enforced loss of a safe place to call 'home' is part of the trauma faced by anyone experiencing persecution and genocide. 'Home' usually means a place of safety, comfort and security. HMD 2019 will reflect on what happens when individuals, families and communities are driven out of, or wrenched from their homes, because of persecution or the threat of genocide, alongside the continuing difficulties survivors face as they try to find and build new homes when the genocide is over.

HMD 2019 will include marking the 25th anniversary of the Genocide in Rwanda, which began in April 1994. HMD activity organisers may particularly want to acknowledge this milestone anniversary and reflect on how this theme impacts on members of the Rwandan community.

It was advised that it takes place in St Woolos Cathedral, all schools are invited and to take part. Some youth choirs and the Gwent Choir also attend. Committee members were also told that they could attend.

**Actions:**

The report was noted.

The SACRE clerk to send out invites to the SACRE members.

## 11 **Final Report from the Commission on Religious Education in England**

The Committee received an executive summary on Religion and World Views: The Way Forward. This report reaffirms the central importance of learning about religious and non-religious worldviews for all pupils, regardless of their background, personal beliefs or the type of school they attend. Knowledge of religious and non-religious worldviews is an essential part of all young people's entitlement to education. This report seeks to articulate that entitlement.

### **Actions:**

The report was noted.

## 12 **WASACRE business**

The Committee were updated of the last WASACRE Meeting that took place in Anglesey on Friday 26 July.

Concerns were raised about the lack of professional support to SACREs on a national level. EAS have bene employed Paula Webber a specialist as advisor within the region, as is the case in Newport, but some other authorities within Wales have lost experienced specialist RE advisors.

Linda Rudge gave a presentation regarding the Religious Education Quality Mark (REQM). When this was set up schools in Wales held quality mark. However, now schools are not applying for the quality mark. At the 20:20 RE Conference Paula attended, teachers from England had received the gold award and shared their experience.

The Committee discussed that this is something that should be promoted. H Stephens advised that Langstone Primary School had previously brought in children's work into the Civic Centre, as well as a few other schools however very few schools in Wales have been applying. He also noted that Bassaleg School that information they submitted didn't meet requirements but they weren't given any feedback, so school were unable to find out how they could improve.

### **Actions:**

To accept the updates on WASACRE business.

## 13 **Future Meetings Dates**

Future meeting dates were discussed. The Spring meeting is still waiting to have a Secondary School venue confirmed. It would take place on 21<sup>st</sup> February or 7<sup>th</sup> March, depending on the school's choice.

The Summer meeting would be taking place in Malpas Church Primary School on 13 June 2019.

### **Actions:**

SACRE clerk to find a venue for the Spring meeting.

The meeting terminated at 11:57