

Minutes



Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Date: 7 November 2019
Time: 10.00 am
Present: Councillors L Lacey (Chair) and J Watkins
In Attendance: P Webber, E Keen, N Baicher, N Huggleston, C Roberts, L Picton, S Sharma,
Apologies: Councillors I Hayat and T Holyoake

1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Apologies noted for Huw Stephens, Rebecca Penn, Heather Vaughan, Clare James

2 Minutes and matters arising of the previous meeting held on 13th June 2019

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record.
Catrin Roberts advised she was in attendance.
Nikki Huggleston gave correction of the spelling of her surname.

3 SACRE Membership update

It was advised that Paddy Landers had recently retired, so there is now a vacancy for a Roman Catholic representative.

PW advised that she will also send a letter to Cytun to request membership.

Actions

Letter to be sent out by Paula to Cytun.

4 Presentation – Onyx Link Foundation

Dr Abdullah introduced himself to the committee. He advised that this is the second time he has attended the SACRE committee, and would show a draft presentation to committee members, hopefully to get the idea across. Onyx are hoping to provide a service to Primary and Secondary schools within Newport. Onyx have been working closely with the Chair of SACRE. OLF are excited about the prospect of this work. Many people attended the Interfaith Seminar earlier in the year and already lots of people are on board with this new project. Dr, Abdullah said that comments and recommendations from the committee will be valuable. Consultation will be made with professionals on how this can be put forward for teaching materials for Primary and Secondary Schools.

First presentation shown. **THE OLF INTERFAITH APPROACH TO RE**

It was explained that OLF may complement the RE Curriculum as there would be an Interfaith input enabling pupils to learn about the values shared by all religions and worldviews regarding One Humanity, Peaceful Coexistence and Caring for Earth, our shared home, and the OLF hope that such knowledge may bring respect and help understanding and appreciation of the similarities in the diversity of the worldviews in our communities.

The Educational Pack holds resources for teachers and pupils including

- Declaration of faith leaders and communities on shared values regarding One Humanity, Morality, and Earth our Home.
- Videos of faith leaders on their values regarding the above.
- Declaration of faith leaders and communities on a faith perspective of citizenship.
- Videos of faith leaders on faith & citizenship.

Activities discussed in meetings with the Chair of Newport SACRE and staff are a means of getting information across. Activities might include Question and Answer sessions. Schools will be able to choose the content. The OLF recently attended the Welsh Assembly to discuss the notion of Islamophobia. The Chief Police Commissioner of Wales was also involved as a cross party partnership in looking at education. It was also used to help raise awareness, for example if someone was assaulted or harassed, what should they do? Should they report to police? It would help the victim but not the perpetrator. Punishment by sending them prison wouldn't help, why did they do it in the first place? With partnership work alongside government workers and community leaders, this will help to address Islamophobia.

During the Q&A sessions pupils will have freedom to ask questions with the objective of seeing faith leaders of different religions sitting together. This itself will improve conflict. It is hoped that students will grill teachers and faith leaders to get knowledge. Advanced discussions could be had with GCSE and A level students including views held within different religions on issues such as organ donation and euthanasia.

Dr Abdullah then gave information about the Interfaith event, Getting to Know You. This may take place in Newport cathedral in the presence of faith leaders. Schools will be invited to book a time slot of up to 2 hours between 10am to 2pm.

SACRE members discussed the practicalities of holding these events. NB commented on the use of technology when speaking to A or GCSE level students, the need for questions to be sent from schools in advance of the sessions.

PW asked Is there a job to some professionals to speak with the people going into the school to give them more confident working with young people? That would be on offer.

During the Officers' pre-meeting it had been suggested the Learning Network lead for RE, Tanya Simmons from Bassaleg School, might like to become involved. PW had contacted her, and she is willing to work on this with a mind to marrying this work with the new curriculum. The Chair commented that it is okay to pitch at this level but need to understand that what is being proposed to schools is correct. NB replied if topic is given, that narrows down the content and links to topics related to the syllabus.

PW replied that in terms of marrying language with new curriculum in part using worldviews and including non-religious world views is brilliant. In some areas, could use "faith and belief", could this be worked on? Dr Abdullah advised absolutely, and will get advice from professionals in RE as they know best what terminology the teachers can deliver. PW wished to ensure that we can cover within RE framework. She then asked that in future, does the OLF envision of having hubs in the rest of Wales? Dr Abdullah absolutely sees this and advised that this proposal is going to be a part of a three-year programme for Gwent, which will be delivered in Gwent and beyond to share good practice. If any of the other SACREs around Wales are interested, then OLF are ready to go and deliver this.

JW queried when people apply for citizenship, are these views highlighted when they are in this process? Dr Abdullah replied that this morning he had had read an article about faith and confident in Wales, that is helping this question in Africa and Sudan. Very important should include this as part of naturalisation. If left to immigration law, will not give orientation to fit. Working with politicians, Assembly Members to get to area. Been supporting refugees in Gwent, most of them have views have been very harmful and a view we see as radical. As to

fit in this society, committed to this. LP advised she will share with Secondary School head teachers and thinks all schools will buy in to this.

The Chair thanked OLF for attending.

Further comments were then made:

- JW commented that this can be a part of community cohesion which Desperately needed.

- NH –advised schools haven't got time to do everything so this would be really helpful.
- The Chair comment that this would work well with new Humanities AoLE.
- NB commented on the need for training, but it will link with new curriculum and language. This will also be of benefit to lots of schools in the valleys who have RE days.

- PW commented that it would be wonderful to have a regional RE conference for young people similar to the Interfaith conference. NB advised there was one held for Bassaleg and Llanwern pupils. Faith representatives would speak for 15 minutes to several groups and have a Q&A.

- The Chair highlighted Newport's issues, and need to make schools aware that SACRE is available for these issues as an advisory service. Even though information is promoted in the newsletter, we need to introduce SACRE if there are any issues.
- PW commented on issues around translation, and suggestions about setting up regional hub for SACRE to store resources. Social media could be a way forward. Hoping to get an EAS twitter account for SACRE and RE in region to promote SACRE. Free and easy way forward in terms of marketing.

- NB liked the idea of holding a small conference. PW advised she has spoken to Chris Abbas who is very keen on the idea.

- It was suggested for PW to write to Baha'i Wales as they have expressed interest in sitting on SACRE committee, and could also invite the Wiccan faith leader, and Tanya Simmonds from Bassaleg school as a co-opted rep.

Action:

PW to check through SACRE Terms of Reference and contact Baha'i, Wiccan representatives and Tanya Simmonds.

5 **Curriculum development update and the Welsh Government consultation on removing the right to withdraw from RE and change of name for RE**

PW gave an update on the Curriculum development. Report in feedback. The Collaboration workshop which went well. All responses are being looked at, it is a time consuming process. There are changes being made to the curriculum. Lots of feedback regarding planning for learning being repetitive. Now hoping the section of designing the curriculum which will be more useful. Achievement outcomes were a bit tick box, so changing them to Descriptions of Learning. The RE framework has been delayed because of the amendments. Redrafting considering these changes to the Humanities. Draft for RE framework will be out in January. Legal changes to do with RE. It will also need to go to consultation to SACREs, which will also take place after January, then SACREs can provide feedback.

There is lots of work going around to Designing your Curriculum to include RE key concepts. Hopefully the SACRE will see guidance in RE in Humanities and the RE framework as offering additional support. It is going to look very different to the previous agreed syllabuses. It will be in line with new curriculum and have links to various parts for example legislation, which is being promoted to overarching to entire curriculum. PW can see importance of RE in curriculum when it comes out. PW flagging up the need for additional guidance for schools if right to withdraw is removed. In law, RE needs to be pluralistic.

JW asked is there a paper schools can use and to give to parents? PW replied there should have a RE policy, but resources need to be developed. PW suggests this needs to be flagged up with Welsh Government so that heads could be supported with this. Welsh Government recognised that professional learning is required. It is the first time the regional consortium has been mentioned in law, so clarification of their role in relation to that of SACREs is needed. SACRE would traditionally have taken roles such as evaluate, support, and monitor RE education.

The proposed name change to Religions and Worldviews. SACRE do not think that is a good move. Which religious would you have to study? It could put barriers up again between religions. Removing "Religion" and changing to "World Views and Religion" could be better as religion is a concept about what you study, whereas narrowing it down to individual religions you are narrowing it greatly. It would also get away from the misunderstanding that we are educating people to be religious, if you choose World Views and Religion, it expands.

When PW saw the report, she thought it was a good way forward. The Religious Education Council of England and Wales is conducting work with TRS UK, looking at concepts coming under worldviews. NH replied it would be easier to explain to parents, that schools are not trying to convert pupils.

NB queried that a few years ago a consultant, Gill Vaisey, wrote a document she had written relating to this. PW replied that schools found that the document, which was from WASACRE, useful, but it would become null and void if the right to withdraw is removed. PW suggested that the guidance should come from Welsh Government to enable schools to manage this.

Actions:

PW to take committee's feedback.

6 SACRE Annual Report 2018-2019 – verbal update

PW advised that the draft report hasn't been completed yet. The deadline is the 30th December 2019 to send to Welsh Government. Once upcoming meetings have been completed this will be completed and sent out to committee members for comment. There would be a week timescale for comments and amendments.

7 Monitoring Provision and Standards - Newport School Inspection Reports

PW presented the overall summary sheet. It was shown Bassaleg, Somerton Primary and St Joseph's primary for information to share good practice.

What was noticed was that in some schools Estyn is only picking up collective worship, duty of every teacher in school, not just about collective worship. Schools not flagging with inspectors. Need to point out in self-evaluation.

Actions:

The committee accepted the report.

8 Learning Network Schools for Religious Education

PW advised that this has been put on the agenda for the first time, EAS appoints leads for

learning networks. They are looking at RE and the need to build it up. Last year meetings had been held which could have more support from teachers attending. Put in dates for our network meetings. If we put those events in letter, the SACRE representative can send out to schools.

Sian Jenkins from Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw, and Tanya Simmonds from Bassaleg School are available to provide support to school. Centred around GCSE. Last year they had designed lots of resources together and shared time. Hubs have been set up for RE teachers across regions. Really like to push this from SACRE as well as from EAS if can. Aim to bring together community of RE professionals. Don't want people to not be supported.

PW can go to primary schools to look at RE and support the new curriculum and she quality assures work done by LNS leads.

LP advised that 2pm – 4pm would be good hours for schools.

Action:

PW to draft letter to send to school from SACRE.

9 **Holocaust Memorial Day 2020**

PW advised that the Holocaust Memorial day will take place on Monday 27 January 2020 Newport Cathedral, 11am. The theme is Stand Together and is more poignant than ever. As SACRE we should promote more.

PW asked could we send information based in report to schools to remind and offer support if needed wanting to deliver. Also, EK had received information from Claudia Hyde, Holocaust Memorial Trust.

LP advised she will take information to headteacher meeting to advise.

Action:

SACRE clerk to send out dates and times to committee and information to be given to school governors so they can give information to schools. Could information be given to school gov councillors so they can give to schools. Covering note – next governing meeting.

10 **WASACRE business**

The committee received the minutes from the previous WASACRE meeting. PW advised that there was a presentation held from Sally Holland which was really good, that looking at the RE framework, and to make sure we are take account of children's rights.

HS advised that he would attend the next committee meeting.

NB gave advice regarding writing to the complaints department. NB the advised that she is speaking next week in Monmouth school regarding Extremism. They always have an RE day which has been at a high standard, where faith representatives give presentations. It is an hour-long session afterwards to discuss and ask questions.

11 **To confirm the date of the next SACRE meetings for 2019 - 2020**

The next SACRE meeting will take place on Thursday 5th March 2020 in Committee Room 1.

The meeting terminated at 12.10 pm