

Minutes



Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

Date: 8 June 2016

Time: 1.45 pm

Present:

LEA Representatives: Councillors D Williams (in the Chair) and A Morris

Officers:

Vicky Thomas (RE Consultant), Martin Dacey (Head of GEMS) and Joy Howells (Democratic Services Support Officer)

Faith Groups:

N Baicher (Sikh), G David (Evangelical), P Landers (Roman Catholic) K Mabbott (United Reform Church) & H Stephens (Baptist)

Teacher Representatives:

K Hicks (UCAC), S Northcott (NUT), L Stevens (NUT) & H Vaughan (NAHT)

Apologies:

Councillors G Giles and C Jenkins, A Powles (Asst Head of Education), S Hunt (Church in Wales), C Comely (Salvation Army) S Sharma (Hindu), J Crawley (ATL) and N Hugglestone (NASUWT)

The meeting was chaired by Cllr D Williams in Cllr Giles' absence.

1 Agenda- Cym

2 Welcome and Presentation

The meeting began with a presentation by Miss Kirsten Hicks, RE teacher at the school. Kirsten was assisted by two year 4 pupils, Cerys Franklin and Evie-Mai Parsons Harewood.

Miss Hicks' presentation was an overview on the teaching of RE at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Teyrnnon. There were in the region of 120 pupils at the school who were from varying backgrounds and religions so it was important that the pupils were aware of the different religions and customs throughout the world.

Nursery classes had been involved in role playing, including a Christian wedding – a short video was shown of this. Reception classes had several weekly sessions of stories from the bible. They also studied festivals such as Easter and Diwali, the Hindu festival.

Year 1 pupils had been involved in role playing relating to the topics they were studying whilst years 2 and 3 had looked at commonality and differences between the religions of Christianity and Islam. The school had also celebrated a multi-cultural week.

Year 4 pupils had been looking at Judaism. Cerys and Leah were two year 4 pupils who both introduced various artefacts from different religions. Cerys showed the Qu'oran, a prayer mat and subha beads. She also gave a brief explanation of the customs of Ramadhan which began this week. Leah showed artefacts from Judaism including a Kippah (skull cap), the Chanukiah candleholder used during Hannukkah. She also showed a Sefer

Torah scroll and explained that the reader would read the scroll from right to left as opposed to the normal manner of left to right.

V Thomas queried whether the school had experienced difficulties obtaining Welsh medium resources, it being a Welsh school. Miss Hicks confirmed there were only a couple of sites with Welsh resources and they relied heavily on Hwb, Digital Learning for Wales.

The Chair thanked Miss Hicks for a very interesting presentation. A folder of RE work carried out by the pupils was also circulated at the meeting.

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 were accepted as a true record.

6 **Matters Arising**

Re Item 4: Matters Arising

A press release concerning the HMD service at St Woolos Cathedral had been sent to the HMD Trust for display on their website.

Re item 5: Membership Update

V Thomas introduced Gifty David (Evangelical) and Kirsty Mabbot (United Reform Church) as new members to SACRE.

Cllr Allan Morris was introduced as a new Newport City Council representative.

Re item 6: Analysis of Examination Results 2015

An analysis of GCSE results had been sent to all Newport secondary schools

Re item 8: National Curriculum Review & Assessment

A list of Pioneer schools had been sent to all Newport schools; however there was still no information on which of the Newport schools would be involved with the design and development of the Humanities framework.

Item 9: WASACRE Issues

Reminders had been sent to those secondary schools who had not returned the Welsh Bacc survey.

7 **Schedule of Meetings - 2016-2017 (All meetings to commence at 10am)**

The following dates were agreed for SACRE meetings, all commencing at 10am:

Autumn meeting – 9 November 2016. This is a business meeting and will take place at the Civic Centre, Newport.

Spring meeting – 8 March 2017. Bassaleg have agreed to host this meeting following a request from their Chair of Governors, Cllr Williams.

Summer meeting – 14 June 2017. The new headteacher who will begin at St Patricks Primary in September has agreed, following a request by P Landers, to host a SACRE meeting.

Agreed:

Clerk to contact schools requesting that either a collective act of worship be arranged or that the RE department of the school showcase some of their work.

8 **Membership Update**

Representatives of Newport City Council, Evangelical Churches and United Reform Church had already been introduced as new SACRE members. There was still another vacancy for a Newport councillor and despite trying several times A Powles had not managed to recruit an ASCL rep.

Agreed:

Cllr D Williams agreed to raise the issue of an ASCL representative with the headteacher of Bassaleg school in the hope one could be found.

9 **Update: Revised Criteria for GCSE & GCE Specifications**

The present position in schools is the availability of different routes in the delivery of RE/RS as there are basically two routes to follow.

- a. RE is a statutory subject at KS4. Many schools in Wales use the statutory RE lessons to follow an RS external examination spec with students taking this examination either as a short course or full course.
- b. A significant number of schools also offer RE as an option subject at KS4. Students who choose it as their option will follow an examination spec for RS and be entered for the full course.

If a student chooses to take RE as an option that student will study the content of the statutory lesson and a different specification as an option. However, under the revision of RS specifications it is proposed that the two specs be merged into one, hence the content of the option course and statutory course would be the same.

National Advisory Panel for Religious Education (NAPfRE) members had met with WJEC to point out the implications of merging the two specifications.

Decisions made following this meeting were:

- WJEC are offering both the short and full course options from a single specification and therefore will not be offering an additional RS GCSE specification from September 2017. There had been no call for an additional RS spec in England. However, it will review the impact after two years.
- It is a matter for each school's internal organisational structures to ensure that an optional RS GCSE course and a RS GCSE (short course) for statutory RE lessons can run side by side.
- WJEC will contact schools who appear to provide an organisational structure which allows the GCSE optional full course and the statutory GCSE RS short course to run concurrently with no overlap and where the pupils are not educationally disadvantaged. These schools can be used as a model for other schools.
- WJEC will contact Estyn to draw attention to the need to keep a watching brief on the provision for statutory KS4 RE.

WASACRE and SACRE will do all they can however there will still only be one specification for statutory and option. V Thomas confirmed that no details of the new specification had been received as yet.

Concerns were raised on this matter as it appeared to be another change without appropriate detail making things difficult for teachers. In the past during inspections of secondary

schools Estyn had identified RS/RE as a subject well planned and well resourced but a watching brief would be needed when the new course is introduced.

It was agreed that making RS an accredited course does give it status with other courses and generally results are better for RS/RE.

The report was noted.

10 **Update: National Curriculum Review & Assessment**

This report updated members on the review of the national curriculum (NC).

NAPfRE has begun the process of drawing up a guidance document for submission to the pioneer network for consideration when working on the shape of the RE curriculum. There have been three meetings to work on this Nov 2015, April 2016 and May 2016.

At the April meeting NAPfRE were joined by two representatives from the Curriculum Division of Welsh Government. Manon Jones who is responsible for the pioneer schools and two areas of learning and experience (ALE), Humanities and Language and Literacy and Abi Williams who will be responsible for Religious Education and ITC. Manon Jones outlined the process and steps they are currently following.

Step 1: Representatives from the pioneer schools have attended a few induction events and are currently working in four working groups in order to develop the structure of the new curriculum:

- Learning beyond the classroom
- Assessment and progression
- Cross curricular responsibilities (literacy, numeracy and digital competence)
- Welsh dimension, international perspective and wider skills

Step 2: Representatives from the pioneer schools will work within areas of learning and experience (ALE) in order to consider the 'big questions' of curriculum development, eg. what is the scope of each ALE? What are the connections between ALEs? There will be a balance of Foundation Phase, primary and secondary practitioners.

Step 3: Representatives from the pioneer schools will consider the strands within each area of learning and experience. Subsidiarity is an important principle but WG hopes that other 'good practice' schools will be involved at this stage to contribute their appropriate expertise and good practice. However the WG library service is gathering evidence of successful curriculums from around the world. They are prepared to work with bodies (such as NAPfRE and WASACRE) for advice.

Steps 2 and 3 are the most important from the point of view of developing the curriculum.

NAPfRE agreed to do the following for WG

- prepare a briefing paper for WG in order to outline the particular issues relating to RE within a new curriculum.
- share any useful documents, action research case studies or examples of good practice which might help the pioneer schools.
- identify schools which exemplify good practice.

V Thomas went through the briefing paper which NAPfRE had prepared for WG identifying three key areas, the place of agreed syllabuses for RE in the curriculum: the withdrawal clause and the teaching of RE at nursery level.

The report was noted.

11 INCERTS

At March meetings of NAPfRE and WASACRE concern was raised by members about the INCERTS software that tracks pupils' progress in NC subjects and RE.

There are two options for schools to choose from regarding level descriptions for RE. Incerts had been advising some schools in Wales that there were no statutory level descriptions for RE and therefore schools were free to choose which set of level descriptions they wished from the programme. This is not the case. As there are level descriptions for schools in Wales they must choose option 2 if following the agreed syllabus.

SACRE agreed that a letter to be sent to all Newport Primary and Special schools advising them of the need to use option 2 of the Incerts software.

Agreed:

That the letter be sent to all the relevant schools.

12 WASACRE Issues

a) Feedback from meeting at Haverfordwest: 8 March 2016

Newport had been represented at the meeting by Vicky Thomas and Huw Stephens.

V Thomas briefly went through the minutes as most items had been covered in the SACRE agenda. .

b) Feedback on Welsh Baccalaureate survey by WASACRE

A survey had been sent to all Wales secondary schools concerning any impact on the teaching of RE since the introduction of the new Welsh Baccalaureate in September 2015. WASACRE queried whether the Welsh Bacc had had a positive or negative impact on RE in schools.

Some members of SACRE were surprised to learn that 16% believed the Welsh Bacc had a *positive* impact on RE, 17% a *negative* impact whilst 67% believed there was no impact. Several members were concerned that a lot of teaching time for RE had been reduced following the introduction of the new Welsh Bacc. It was feared that perhaps the survey had not reached the relevant level for answers to be given ie the RE department. They were also concerned to note that only 70 of 207 secondary schools in Wales had completed and returned the surveys. Some of these issues were to be raised at WASACRE meeting in June by the SACRE representative.

Regarding the question asking schools if they required support from their local SACRE many identified GCSE resourcing. VT confirmed it was not the role of SACREs to support schools with RE at GCSE – this is the role of the WJEC. However, WASACRE and SACREs are raising issues with the WJEC Board.

c) WASACRE meeting 23 June 2016

Although V Thomas was unable to attend the meeting in Rhyl on 23 June 2016 Huw Stephens confirmed that he would attend.

d) Executive Voting for the period 2016-2019.

The relevant pen portraits were discussed and it was agreed that Newport would support the nominations for Mary Parry, Huw Stephens and Mathew Maidment.

Agreed:

Clerk to forward the WASACRE papers for 23 June meeting to Huw Stephens on receipt.

H Stephens to submit Newport's vote for the Executive Committee at the meeting on 23 June 2016.

13 Correspondence

The Clerk confirmed that an email from Libby Jones containing a WG update on the curriculum review as at May 2016 had been forwarded to all SACRE members.

With no further items to discuss the meeting concluded. The Chair thanked everyone for attending and for their input into the agenda items.

The meeting terminated at Time Not Specified