

Welcome to WASACRE- Ian Budd

I would like to welcome you all here this morning to the Wales Association of SACREs summer term meeting. I am Ian Budd and I am the Chief Education Officer here in Flintshire, Vice Chair of ADEW following three years as Chairman and Lead Director for GwE, the North Wales Education Consortium.

There is no doubt that the changes to school improvement services across Wales have had an impact on the way SACREs are able to undertake their functions to monitor, challenge and support Religious Education and Collective Worship.

There are opportunities out there for faith partners to refresh and renew their capacity and engagement with school improvement practice and their wider partnerships with Welsh Government and the Local Government Family.

The changes to school improvement services as part of the national model also specifically focus (steeped in international learning and research on effective practice) on promoting school to school support networks, including curriculum leader networks and peer to peer tailored improvement support, including mentoring and coaching within and across schools.

Today's agenda supports the promotion of good practice in regards to Collective Worship. There is an opportunity to see the opportunities our young people have to work with faith communities. There is also the opportunity to look at the recommendations from a cross European document promoting good practice in Religious Education.

Religious Education supports many values that enable young people to become lifelong learners. It enables learners to engage with important questions about life and our existence. Learners need the ability to be able to explore and be able to rationalise their own and other people's beliefs about a range of issues. In our ever-increasing intercultural world, we all need to practice the art of empathy, compassion and tolerance whilst being able to stay true to one's own beliefs and heritage. Lifelong learners acquire skills, whether they be academic, personal or social all of which can be addressed in the Religious Education classroom.

Within the world of education, we live in exciting, changing and challenging times. One in which good practice and teacher development will be found within and disseminated across classrooms. More open classrooms, and a more open culture in which we all recognise that we are learners, with learning to share and learning to gain from others. This conference has the privileged position of bringing teachers, local councillors and faith representatives together to challenge, learn from and support each other. I hope that as you listen and think about the issues raised in the presentations today you will be able to feed back to your own areas that which will enhance the lives of our young people and improve the quality of learning and teaching that goes on in our schools daily.