



CAERPHILLY STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON MONDAY, 2ND NOVEMBER 2015 AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor J. Taylor - Chair

Councillors:

Mrs E.M. Aldworth, D.G. Carter, Mrs M.E. Sargent

Representing Teaching Organisations: Miss H. Bartley (ATL), Mrs L. Strange (NASUWT)

Representing Religious Organisations: Captain C. DiPalma (The Salvation Army), Mrs J. Jones (Church in Wales), Mr M. Western (Roman Catholic Archdiocese)

Co-opted Members: Mr E. Mushayanyama (Race Equalities Wales)

Together with:

Mrs V. Thomas (RE Consultant), Mrs J. Elias (ALN Service Manager) and Miss R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

1. WELCOME

The Chair opened the meeting and introductions were made.

Members were pleased to welcome back Mr Martyn Western (Roman Catholic Archdiocese) who had recently recovered from an extended period of illness. A warm welcome was also extended to Mrs Jacquelyn Elias (ALN Service Manager) who was attending the meeting on behalf of Mrs Tanis Cunnick (Manager – Community, Youth Service and Adult).

Councillor Mrs E.M. Aldworth was welcomed to her first meeting of Caerphilly SACRE, having replaced retired Member Councillor D.M. Gray.

It was noted that Carl Di-Palma (The Salvation Army) had recently been promoted from Lieutenant to Captain. Members congratulated Captain Di-Palma on his achievement.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs N. Boardman (NUT), Mrs B. Davies (UCAC), Mr C. Parry (NAHT), Mrs E. Hawthorn (United Reformed Church) and Rev. E Williams (Baptist Union of Wales), together with Mrs T. Cunnick (Manager – Community, Youth Service and Adult).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

4. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR TO CAERPHILLY SACRE

Nominations were sought for the position of Vice-Chair to Caerphilly SACRE.

Councillor Mrs M.E. Sargent was nominated but regretfully declined, owing to a number of other commitments.

A nomination for Mrs Janet Jones was moved and seconded, and it was unanimously agreed that she be appointed as Vice-Chair of Caerphilly SACRE.

5. MINUTES – 10TH JUNE 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Caerphilly SACRE meeting held on 10th June 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

6. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2015-2016

SACRE noted the dates of the next two meetings:-

The Spring Term meeting will be held on Thursday 3rd March 2016 (2pm) at Lewis School, Pengam.

The Summer Term will be held on Tuesday 14th June 2016 (2pm) - venue to be confirmed.

It was agreed that the Clerk to SACRE will seek a suitable primary school venue within the county borough for the Summer Term meeting and inform Members once this is secured.

7. MEMBERSHIP UPDATE 2015-2016

Mrs Vicky Thomas (RE Consultant to SACRE) referred Members to the current list of SACRE membership as contained within the agenda papers.

A Councillor vacancy within the membership list was noted, as Councillor W. David had recently resigned from Caerphilly SACRE owing to other commitments. Members thanked Councillor David for his contribution to the Committee and it was agreed that the Clerk to SACRE would seek a replacement Member from amongst local authority Councillors.

SACRE were pleased with the news that the vacant NAHT teaching association position had recently been filled by Mr Chris Parry, Headteacher at Lewis School Pengam. SACRE noted the contents of the report.

8. CAERPHILLY SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015

Mrs Thomas presented the draft Caerphilly SACRE Annual Report for 2014-2015 for Members' consideration and approval prior to its submission to the Welsh Government's Department for Education and Skills (DfES) by 31st December 2015.

The Annual Report outlined the activities of SACRE during the academic year 2014-2015 and Members' comments were welcomed. The RE Consultant referred Members to the executive summary of advice given by SACRE, and highlighted specific issues and the actions taken by SACRE to ensure it met all its statutory requirements.

Members were asked to check the Annual Report for accuracy and amendments were noted to the Membership of SACRE listed within Appendix 1 of the report. It was agreed that the final version of the Annual Report be submitted to DfES and circulated electronically to WASACRE (who will include the Annual Report on their website), together with schools and other relevant parties.

Subject to the above amendments, it was unanimously agreed that the SACRE Annual Report for 2014-2015 be approved.

9. SACRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2015-2018

The report detailed the new Caerphilly SACRE Development Plan for the academic years 2015-2018, which identifies the key issues that need to be addressed in respect of RE provision across all schools in the county borough.

A copy of the completed Development Plan for 2012-2015 was detailed in the SACRE Annual Report, which outlined the actions identified, outcomes required and progress made in respect of RE provision over the past three academic years.

Members were referred to the new SACRE Development Plan for 2012-2015 as contained within the agenda papers, and its four main aims were outlined:-

1. To monitor standards in Religious Education and Religious Studies;
2. To review the agreed syllabus (as appropriate) and support its implementation;
3. To monitor provision and provide support for collective worship;
4. To ensure a more informed SACRE through providing regular updates on local and national issues related to RE and collective worship within schools.

Mrs Thomas outlined the plan of action for each of these aims, appropriate timelines, the involvement of relevant persons, time and costs to implement these actions, and the required outcomes.

Reference was made to the Donaldson Review of the National Curriculum and its implications for the future of Religious Education within the agreed syllabus. Mrs Thomas explained that regular meetings were being held between RE Advisors to SACRE across Wales to discuss such implications and confirmed that SACRE would be kept updated on any developments on a termly basis.

Having fully considered the report, Members noted the content and planned actions of the SACRE Development Plan 2015-2018.

10. CAERPHILLY SCHOOLS INSPECTION REPORTS ANALYSIS AUTUMN 2014 - SUMMER 2015

The report outlined the main RE findings derived from the Estyn inspection of thirteen Caerphilly schools between Autumn 2014 and Summer 2015. The analysis focused on comments in relation to spiritual development and collective worship. The context of the report was explained to SACRE and that the focus of SACRE's remit was on RE and collective worship findings and not the general inspection results of the school, which could significantly vary in other areas.

Mrs Thomas provided a detailed summary of the findings for each of the inspected schools, including details relating to spiritual development, the quality of collective worship and whether the school met statutory legal requirements in relation to collective worship. Other comments and issues were also outlined in the findings.

The report explained that the Estyn Common Inspection Framework notes that inspectors should only report on instances where the school does not comply with statutory requirements relating to collective worship. The inspection report for Lewis Girls School stated that the school does not comply with the statutory collective worship requirements. SACRE agreed that the action plan for the school be requested, together with an update on progress made in addressing this recommendation.

In Autumn 2014, a lack of inspector comments regarding the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development and the quality of acts of collective worship had been noted by Caerphilly SACRE, who had subsequently written to the Chief Inspector of Estyn to request that this matter be addressed. SACRE were pleased to note that in 2014-2015, all inspections made reference to SMSC development and six of the Estyn inspections commented on the quality of collective worship in schools

A number of positive outcomes were derived from the analysis and detailed to SACRE Members, including the finding that pupils have opportunities to reflect on spiritual and moral values and to reflect on their decisions during class lessons and in collective worship. Pupils take an active part in collective worship, which contributes well to their learning. School assemblies also provide a wide range of benefits, namely the fostering of shared values and opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of different emotions and characteristics. During a 'Shoe Box' assembly held in one school, pupils were able to reflect on the significant differences in their own lives and those of people in poorer parts of the world. In another school, the local church holds services in the school hall for pupils and members of the local community, and this helps to develop the spiritual dimension of pupils' development well. One school report identified that opportunities for pupils to reflect on the world around them during collective worship sessions are limited.

It was noted that there was a comment listed against Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Allta which explained that the school does not always ensure a balance of subjects and therefore does not meet the statutory requirements in respect of ensuring consistency in the provision for religious education. SACRE agreed to request the action plan for the school, together with an update on progress made in addressing this recommendation.

During consideration of the report, discussion took place regarding the meaning of the Estyn assessment of "adequate" against current performance and prospects for improvement within a number of schools. Mrs Elias clarified the meaning of the term "adequate" against the Estyn framework and explained to Members that this meant that there were no urgent issues identified against the assessed school.

Mrs Thomas expressed the need for a clear definition to be made between general school performance and that of Religious Education/collective worship in Estyn inspections, explaining that it was feasible that school performance could be assessed as “excellent” in terms of RE/collective worship but not in other areas (or vice versa). Mrs Elias confirmed that she would include this comment in Caerphilly Council’s response to the findings of the Estyn inspections.

A Member suggested that those schools with an Estyn assessment of “excellent” against current performance/prospects for improvement could share their teaching methods with those schools assessed as “adequate” in these areas. Mrs Elias outlined the benefits of sharing good practice and confirmed that she would relay the suggestion to the appropriate agencies.

Following consideration of the report, Members noted the analysis of the Estyn inspection reports. Schools are expected to draw up an action plan, which shows how they intend to address the recommendations arising from the inspections, and Estyn will monitor the school progress. As two schools had a recommendation related to RE and collective worship it was agreed that the Clerk to SACRE would request an update from Mrs Keri Cole (Chief Education Officer), in relation to the action plans for Lewis Girls School and Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Allta and how they intend to meet the statutory requirements as identified by Estyn.

11. RE AND THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM - UPDATE

The report provided an update on the review of assessment arrangements and the National Curriculum in Wales, which is led by Professor Graham Donaldson and includes two phases. Phase 2 of the review has focused on curriculum design at each phase/stage of education to ensure that there is a broad and balanced curriculum which is fit for the 21st Century. It included consideration of the Basic Curriculum (which is where RE sits within the curriculum).

Members were informed that in Summer 2014, the Minister for Education and Skills, Huw Lewis AM, made comment about proposed changes to RE in the curriculum, which were widely reported in the press. WASACRE wrote to the Minister asking for clarification on his comments and a response was received, a copy of which was attached to the report.

The letter voiced acceptance of the Donaldson recommendations and welcomed engagement from schools, practitioners and other key stakeholders in designing and developing the new curriculum. WASACRE Executive Members were invited to attend regular meetings with Welsh Government officers so that a productive working arrangement could be implemented. At the first meeting, a number of matters were clarified:-

1. Confirmation that RE will remain a statutory subject as suggested in the Review;
2. Assurances that full consultation will take place on a proposed name change for Religious Education (to include Moral Education and Philosophy);
3. Confirmation that all legislation relating to RE, Collective Worship and SACREs’ standing in such legislation will be reviewed by WG
4. Confirmation of a non-prescriptive framework for each Area of Learning (with RE to sit in the Humanities area of learning), with key stakeholders (including WASACRE) involved in the shaping of the new curriculum.

Discussion took place regarding the specifics of the non-prescriptive framework and the implications of the proposed name change from RE to Moral Education and Philosophy in respect of the subjects this would potentially encompass as part of the new syllabus. Mrs Thomas referred to the statement from the Minister for Education and Skills for regional education consortia to work with their schools and lead on the design and development of the new curriculum alongside other key stakeholders and the plans to progress Professor Donaldson’s recommendations. She explained that the future shape of Religious Education

as part of the National Curriculum would become clearer once this engagement process had been established. Members also discussed the impact of current and future legislation on the proposed changes.

Having considered and discussed the key points within the report, Members noted the update in respect of proposed changes to Religious Education within the National Curriculum.

12. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2016

The report informed Members of the resources available to schools in order to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day 2016.

The RE Consultant advised that the theme for 2016 is “Don’t Stand By”, which refers to the inactivity of bystanders during the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and subsequent genocides. Further information on the theme and free educational resources are available through the Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) website at www.hmd.org.uk/content/for-educators.

Reference was made to an exhibition and memorial that took place at Blackwood Miners Institute during Holocaust Memorial Day 2015 to remember the victims of the Holocaust and other atrocities. It was agreed that the Clerk to SACRE would contact Council colleagues to determine whether any such events were taking place this year.

Members noted the theme and resources available to schools in order to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day 2016 and it was agreed that the Clerk to SACRE would write to all schools to make them aware of these resources and encourage them to commemorate the event.

13. REQUEST TO ISSUE THE PRESENTATION MADE TO WASACRE “MUSLIM FOOTBALLERS IN THE PREMIER LEAGUE” TO ALL RE SECONDARY SCHOOL DEPARTMENTS IN CCBC

Earlier in the year, Mrs Mary Parry (a local authority RE Advisor) delivered a presentation to WASACRE in response to an Estyn inspection which identified an issue around the motivation of boys in the study of RE. During this presentation, Mrs Parry shared a scheme of work for KS3 pupils that she had developed, entitled “Muslim Footballers in the Premier League”. The scheme contains a number of tasks which aims to engage and motivate boys, raise standards, implement the Literacy and Numeracy Framework, and develop religious education skills and thinking skills.

A copy of this scheme of work was tabled during the Summer 2015 meeting of Caerphilly SACRE and Members had been pleased to note the informative range of activities outlined within the scheme and how they related to RE. The scheme identified a number of Muslim footballers throughout the Premier League and contained activities which asked pupils to consider the ways in which Islam affect players’ lives on and off the football pitch. By making Islamic study adaptable and relevant to a topic that they could identify with, it was hoped that this scheme of work would engage boys in RE and raise their standards.

Mrs Thomas advised Members that since that time, she had received permission from Mrs Parry to copy and distribute copies of the teaching resources for use in schools, which were accompanied by a CD-ROM disc

Caerphilly SACRE extended their thanks to Mrs Parry for waiving copyright on these valuable teaching resources. It was agreed that the Clerk to SACRE would distribute a copy of the resources to all RE secondary school departments in the county borough.

14. CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk to SACRE informed Members that details of a free one-day RE Conference which was hosted by the University of Wales, Swansea, had recently been circulated to all secondary schools in the county borough. This information had also been emailed to SACRE Members.

Members were advised that the Autumn Term 2015 edition of the RE Ideas newsletter, which is issued Religious Education Movement Wales (REMW), had recently been circulated to all schools in the county borough. A copy of this newsletter had also been sent to SACRE Members.

Members noted correspondence recently received in respect of Scholarships offered by the Farmington Institute, Oxford, for the academic year 2016/2017. Details of the eligibility and composition of the Scholarships were outlined and Members agreed that this information be circulated to all schools in order to raise awareness of the opportunities provided by the Institution. It was agreed that the Clerk to SACRE would circulate a PDF version of the information leaflet to all Head Teachers and RE contacts.

Miss Helen Bartley (ATL) also advised that Newbridge School had recently received a letter from a Humanist representative, who has offered to attend a school assembly to present a Humanism perspective on religion. Mrs Thomas explained that it would be for the school to make a decision on whether they wished to take up this offer.

15. WASACRE – FEEDBACK FROM THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IN MOLD – 25TH JUNE 2015

Members were updated on the discussions and deliberation of WASACRE at its Annual General Meeting in Mold on 25th June 2015.

Reference was made to a presentation given by Mrs Libby Jones which outlined training on collective worship and how to deliver it effectively, together with a presentation made by Mr Phil Lord which shared case studies of good practice partnership working between schools and churches. WASACRE discussed a lack of Welsh representation on the RE Council for England and Wales and they will follow up on this matter. Information was also shared from the Welsh Government regarding World War I commemorations and the availability of a grant to all departments in schools. Further information will be made available on the WASACRE website.

In noting that concerns had been raised by WASACRE regarding the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification and its potential to eliminate GCSE Religious Studies as an option subject (due to its inclusion within the list of options choices), Members discussed how this had affected the availability of the RE Short Course offered within schools. Mrs Thomas advised that WASACRE and individual SACREs had been asked to closely monitor the situation.

Members expressed concern regarding the differences in the Welsh Baccalaureate and GCSE Religious Education syllabuses, which could be compounded by the National Curriculum changes arising from the Donaldson Review. Mrs Thomas confirmed that she would raise this matter with the National Advisory Panel and monitor how other local authorities are addressing the situation.

SACRE noted the discussions and deliberations of WASACRE at the Annual General Meeting in Mold.

16. REPRESENTATION AT THE NEXT MEETING OF WASACRE IN BLAENAU GWENT

Members were advised that the next WASACRE meeting would be held on **25th November 2015** in Ebbw Vale, Blaenau Gwent, and nominations for representation were sought from Caerphilly SACRE.

Councillor J. Taylor advised that he might be able to attend, subject to other commitments. It was noted that Mrs J. Jones and Mrs V. Thomas would be in attendance. It was agreed that the Clerk to SACRE would circulate agenda papers nearer to the meeting date and confirm attendance from interested representatives.

The Chair thanked the Members of Caerphilly SACRE for their attendance at the meeting.

The meeting closed at 3.31 pm

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2016, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR