

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CAERPHILLY STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 2ND JULY 2003 AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Mrs A. Collins, R.W. Gough, K.R. Snell and J. Taylor

Representing Teacher Associations

Ms S. John and J. Hogan

Representing Religious Organisations

Mrs J. Jones (Church in Wales)

Captain J. Jepson (Salvation Army)

Mrs M. Wade (United Reform Church)

Together with:

Ms V. Thomas (ESIS Religious Education Adviser), Ms C. Thomas (ESIS Associate Religious Education Adviser) and Mrs K. Wall (Committee Services Officer)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs K.R. Baker and D.M. Gary, Miss H. Bartley (ATL), Mrs C. Anthony (NAHT) and Mr D. Brooks (Baptist Church in Wales).

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

Councillor J. Taylor was elected as Chairman and Councillor Mrs K.R. Baker as Vice Chairman for the ensuing year.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made during the course of the meeting.

3. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed Captain Jepson, representing the Salvation Army and Mrs J. Jones, representing the Church in Wales to their first meeting and introductions were made.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the following minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman -

[Minutes of the meeting held on 6th March 2003](#)

5. **MATTER ARISING**

(a) **Nomination to Serve on WASACRE Executive Committee**

It was reported that Councillor D.M. Gray's nomination to serve on the WASACRE Executive Committee had been unsuccessful and SACRE was informed that at the WASACRE meeting held on 27th June, the following Officers had been elected –

Vice Chair	Father Ieuan Wyn Jones (Cardiff)
Members of the Executive Committee	Mr Peter Hallam (Carmarthen) Mr Rheinallt Thomas (Anglesey)

6. **PRESENTATION – DATA ANALYSIS**

The Chairman welcomed and introduced Ms Carol Stokes, ESIS Statistics and Information Officer who had been invited to the meeting to make a presentation on data analysis and the type of benchmarking data, such as the number of children receiving free school meals used in these calculations.

Ms Stokes opened her presentation by explaining the difference between 'attainment' and 'achievement' i.e. 'attainment' being a measure of performance that takes no account of potential or progress and 'achievement' as being a measure of performance set in the context of progress made over a period of time.

She also explained that benchmarking data such as the percentage of free schools meals provided in individual schools was used as an indicator of the socio/economic level of the school and that all schools in Wales were placed in the lower, middle or upper quartile depending on their rating. This rating was then used when examining data in respect of the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science.

Reference was made to the Welsh Examination Database (WED), available from the Welsh National Assembly that provided details of the WJEC Board results and Ms Stokes reported that graphs could be produced for individual schools showing their performance compared with the Welsh average.

She also explained how a 'residual figure' i.e. the difference between the level attained by an individual child and the level achieved by similar children throughout Wales.

SACRE members acknowledged how useful this information was for schools in making meaningful comparisons and in raising standards.

The Chairman thanked Ms Stokes for attending and for the information provided.

7. **INSPECTION REPORTS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2003**

Reports providing an analysis of inspections undertaken in the primary and secondary sectors during the period Spring 2002 to Spring 2003 were circulated at the meeting.

Miss Thomas (ESIS Associate Religious Education Adviser) then outlined the main findings in respect of Religious Education and collective worship for both the primary and secondary sectors.

Primary Sector – Main Findings

- Spiritual development was satisfactory or better in each of the thirteen schools inspected
- The majority of schools complied with the legal requirements of daily collective worship
- Standards in Religious Education were satisfactory or better in every school
- Standards in Religious education were very good at Gilfach Fargoed Primary (KS1)
- Standards of Religious Education were good at Ystrad Mynach Infants, Cefn Fforest Primary, Gilfach Fargoed Primary (KS2), Machen Primary, Pontllanfraith Primary, Upper Rhymney Primary and Ysgol y Lawnt
- Standards of Religious Education were satisfactory at Crumlin High Level Primary, Hengoed Primary, Libanus primary, Tirphil Primary and Ysgol Ifor Bach
- At Bedwas Infant School, insufficient work had been observed during the period of the inspection to make an overall judgement

The analysis report also listed the good features and shortcomings identified in the inspection reports.

During discussion, Mrs Thomas referred to a textual inaccuracy made by an Inspector in one of the inspection reports and it was agreed that a letter should be sent to ESTYN explaining SACRE's role in monitoring inspection reports and drawing attention to the inaccuracy noted.

SACRE members were pleased to note the high standards observed in the primary sector and it was agreed that a letter congratulating achievement should be sent to schools whose standards were good or better.

Secondary Sector - Main Findings

SACRE was informed that five secondary schools had been inspected during the period Spring 2002 to Spring 2003 and copies of reports that provided a summary of the findings in respect of standards, spiritual and moral development and collective worship in each school were circulated. The reports also included relevant extracts from the schools' inspection reports and highlighted the key issues for action identified therein.

During consideration of the analysis it was noted that the inspections in respect of the following schools had identified the need to meet the statutory requirements to provide a daily act of worship for all pupils as a key issue for action -

- Newbridge Comprehensive - it was noted that this issue had been raised in the last inspection report. Although the report noted that there had been some progress in that all form tutors had been provided with a resource book, in practice the school did not yet meet statutory requirements
- Risca Comprehensive - it was noted that this issue had been raised in the last inspection report
- St Martin's Comprehensive – it was noted that it was a key issue for action in the last inspection to meet statutory duties in respect of collective worship and Religious Education in year 13.
- Rhymney Comprehensive – it was noted that it was a key issue for action in the last inspection to meet statutory duties in respect of collective worship.
- Oakdale Comprehensive – it was noted that the last inspection report had identified the need to meet statutory duties.

In the remaining three schools, in addition to the need to provide a daily act of collective worship, the following matters had also been identified as key issues for action -

- St Martin's Comprehensive - all sixth form students to access Religious Education within the curriculum
- Rhymney Comprehensive - the need to provide statutory Religious Education in the sixth form
- Oakdale Comprehensive - the need to meet requirements of the agreed Religious Education syllabus in KS4 (due to insufficient time allocation)

Whilst accepting the practical problems experienced by many schools in providing a daily act of collective worship for all pupils, SACRE members expressed their concern that the statutory requirement was not being met and it was agreed that a letter would be sent to all the schools, requesting a copy of their Post Inspection Action Plans and offering SACRE's help in addressing the key issues identified for action.

Mrs Thomas also drew attention to the new in-service training programme provided by ESIS that included a course entitled 'Collective Worship in the Secondary School', to be run in the autumn term and a course entitled 'Post 16 Provision of Religious Education' scheduled for the Spring 2004. SACRE members felt that these courses would be very useful for the schools in addressing their key issues for action and it was suggested that course details should be forwarded to the schools with the letter mentioned above.

8. **WASACRE SYMPOSIUM**

Consideration was given to the report that summarised the main discussion points of the Symposium on Religious Education Agreed Syllabuses held at Llanidloes in April 2002. At the last SACRE meeting held in March, detailed consideration had been given to the discussion points and the four key questions posed at the Symposium and SACRE members had been invited to make comments. These comments had now been collated and a draft response prepared.

Consideration was then given to the draft response that had been included with the agenda papers and SACRE approved it for submission to WASACRE by the end of July. It was further agreed that copies of the report should be sent to governing bodies of Caerphilly schools.

9. **FEEDBACK FROM THE WASACRE MEETING HELD IN WREXHAM ON 27TH JUNE 2003**

Copies of a report that provided a summary of the discussions and deliberations of WASACRE at its meeting held in Wrexham on 27th June were circulated to those present and Miss Thomas provided a verbal update in respect of the following issues –

(a) **WASACRE Executive Committee Report - Possible amendments to the Constitution**

Miss Thomas reported that WASACRE members had accepted the Executive Committee Report, which proposed possible amendments to the code of practice and constitution and SACREs had been asked to discuss the suggested amendments before the WASACRE meeting in November.

In light of this request, it was agreed that an item for discussion would be included on the agenda for the next meeting,

(b) **The Early Years**

Miss Thomas reported that WASACRE had received a presentation on religious education in the early years from Gill Vaisey and Mary Parry. During the presentation,

reference was made to practical examples of good practice such as work on infant baptism and the creation story using the big book 'In the Beginning'.

It was noted that this book was now out of print and WASACRE agreed to write to Lion Publishing Company to ask them to consider reprinting the book and translating it into Welsh.

SACRE supported this course of action and agreed that a similar letter should also be sent to Lion Publishing on behalf of Caerphilly SACRE.

(c) **Review of the Year**

WASACRE approved its Review of the Year for circulation to SACREs and it was agreed that this issue would be further discussed at the next SACRE meeting.

10. **INSET NEEDS AND PLANS (SUMMER 2003)**

SACRE noted the report that outlined details of the in-service training provided for Caerphilly schools for the Summer Term 2003 that aimed to promote and support -

- the raising of standards of pupils' attainment in religious education
- the highest quality provision of religious education.

11. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at the Council Offices, Tredomen on Wednesday 15th October at 2.00 p.m.

The meeting closed at 4.00 p.m.