

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CAERPHILLY STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 15TH OCTOBER 2003 AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

D.M. Gray and J. Taylor

Representing Teacher Associations

Mrs E. Hawthorn

Representing Religious Organisations

Mrs J. Jones (Church in Wales) and D. Brooks (Independent)

Together with:

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

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs K.R. Baker, Mrs A. Collins, R.W. Gough, K.R. Snell and Miss S. John (UCAC), Mrs C. Anthony (NAHT), Mr J. Hogan (SHA), Miss H. Bartley (ATL), Miss N. Thomas (NUT), Captain J. Jepson (Salvation Army) and Mrs M. Wade (United Reform Wales).

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2. MINUTES

It was noted that nobody present at the meeting had attended the last SACRE meeting held on 2nd July. In view of this, it was agreed that consideration would be given to any matters arising from the minutes but that they should be re-submitted to the next meeting to consider their accuracy.

3. MATTERS ARISING

(a) Nomination to serve on WASACRE Executive (minute no 5, page 2)

Councillor Gray reported that he had received a letter from WASACRE inviting him to fill the vacancy that existed on the WASACRE Executive as a result of Mrs Susan Collingbourne becoming WASACRE secretary.

SACRE members congratulated and supported Councillor Gray on his appointment.

(b) Inspection Reports for the Academic Year 2003

At the last meeting, attention had been drawn to a textual inaccuracy made by an inspector in one of the primary sector inspection reports and at the request of SACRE, the Clerk had written to ESTYN, outlining SACRE's role in monitoring inspection reports and drawing attention to the inaccuracy.

The Chairman reported that Mrs Susan Lewis, Chief Inspector at ESTYN had responded to the letter and had thanked SACRE for drawing attention to this issue.

Mrs Thomas (ESIS Religious Education Adviser) also reported that the inspection reports analysis had identified the need for the five secondary schools inspected during this period to comply with the statutory requirements to provide a daily act of collective worship.

She reported that the INSET course entitled 'Collective Worship in the Secondary school' had been held in the autumn term and that it was pleasing to note that three of the schools identified above had attended the course.

4. SCHEDULE OF FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

The following schedule of meetings was agreed:-

Thursday, 4th December 2003 at 2.00 p.m. venue to be arranged

Wednesday, 17th March 2004 at the Tredomen Offices

Monday, 14th June 2004 - venue to be arranged

During consideration of this item, the Chairman reported that Captain Jepson, the Salvation Army representative had tendered her apology for absence but had suggested that the December SACRE meeting could be held in the Salvation Army Citadel in Risca.

SACRE members welcomed this suggestion and it was agreed that the Clerk would contact Captain Jepson to make the necessary arrangements.

5. CAERPHILLY SACRE ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2002 - 2003

Consideration was given to SACRE's Annual Report for the academic year 2002 - 2003. Mrs Thomas drew attention to some minor typing errors and it was agreed that the amended document would be submitted to ACCAC by 30th December.

6. CAERPHILLY SACRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2001 – 2003 AND 2003 – 2005 AND REVIEW OF THE AGREED SYLLABUS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: THE WAY FORWARD

Consideration was given to the report that updated members in respect of progress made against the aims listed in SACRE's Development Plan for 2001 - 2003 and identified SACRE's aims for 2003 - 2005.

Particular attention was paid to the need to revise the agreed syllabus for religious education and to produce additional guidance to schools as identified in the Development Plan 2003 - 2005.

Mrs Thomas outlined the following plan of action:-

- questionnaire to be sent to schools - Autumn 2003
- working party of teachers to be established - Spring 2004
- update SACRE on progress on a termly basis
- survey schools on draft revised syllabus - Autumn 2004
- Standing Conference to be held - Autumn 2004
- organise training programme for teachers - Spring 2005
- implement revised syllabus - Autumn 2005
- update handbook to the agreed syllabus - Spring 2004 - Spring 2005
- update and distribute resource list to support delivery of revised agreed syllabus - Spring 2005

She also reported that the questionnaire referred to above had already been sent to schools and that so far there had been a good response rate. An analysis of the returns would be reported to a future meeting.

SACRE members noted the costs associated with the review of the agreed syllabus in advisory time, working party costs and publishing costs and it was therefore agreed that the Clerk should write to the Director of Education drawing attention to the statutory requirement to revise the agreed syllabus and the cost implications so that this could be addressed when the Education and Leisure future budget was considered.

7. INSET NEEDS AND PLANS 2003 - 2005

Members noted the report that provided details of the in-service training provided for Caerphilly schools during the academic years 2003 - 2005.

8. ATTENDANCE LEVELS FOR INSET 2002 - 2003

Members noted the report that provided details of the attendance levels for INSET during the academic year 2002 - 2003.

9. EXEMPLIFICATION OF STANDARDS DOCUMENT FOR KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

Copies of the document entitled 'Assessment in Religious Education - Key Stages 1 and 2 - Guidance and Exemplification of Standards' were circulated to those present.

The booklet aimed to give teachers guidance in using the level descriptions to assess pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 and would help teachers within the same school and across all schools in the LEA to make judgements about pupils' standards of achievement in RE which were consistent and reliable.

Members acknowledged the usefulness of the document and looked forward to its use in schools within the county borough.

10. RE AND KEY SKILLS: SECONDARY EXEMPLIFICATION (NUMERACY)

Copies of the support document entitled 'Numeracy and Religious Education' were circulated to those present.

Mrs Thomas explained that the document had arisen out of the LEA secondary monitoring focus of 'Mathematical Skills Across the Curriculum'. As a result of the LEA review programme, examples of good practice had been noted and collated into a support document that aimed to improve the quality of teaching and learning in religious education.

It was noted that the document had already been distributed to secondary departments, through the Annual Conference held in June 2002 and would continue to be distributed to schools through relevant INSET.

SACRE members noted and commended the document.

11. ACCAC REVIEW OF SACRE REPORTS 2000 - 2001 AND 2001 - 2002

Copies of the ACCAC document entitled 'Review of SACRE Reports 2000 - 2001 and 2001 - 2002' had been circulated with the agenda papers. Mrs Thomas also informed members that ACCAC would soon begin the process of updating the guidance document to SACREs on writing annual reports and that a meeting would be held in the Autumn term to which a representative from each SACRE would be invited to contribute to the debate.

The Chair of WASACRE had also suggested that SACREs agenda this for discussion during the Autumn term meeting in order to provide feedback to the ACCAC meeting.

Consideration was given to the report and during discussion, members made the following comments:-

- In Section 2.7 - The standards achieved by schools, the categories that range across borders such as 'satisfactory to good' was not explicit enough and an overall judgement should be made.
- Production of an annual review would be more helpful than the current bi- annual review.
- It would be helpful if all authorities distinguished between post 16 statutory RE and A/AS level RS results.
- There should be a level of consistency in the information provided by authorities i.e. not all authorities provided a breakdown of the number of girls or boys sitting examinations or of the results of the Certificate of Educational Achievement (CoEA) Religious Studies examination.
- In section 2.25 – Evidence of SACREs discussing examination results and their resultant action, it would be useful to include more information on the resultant actions taken.
- Section 2.27 – Methods of teaching, choice of teaching resources and teacher training did not include a complete list of the training courses offered.
- Information on the work undertaken by SACREs in respect of National Holocaust Memorial Day would be useful to include.
- RE level description data across local authorities would also be helpful where applicable.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE WASACRE MEETING – 27TH JUNE 2003

Members were informed that at its meeting held on 27th June WASACRE had asked SACREs to:-

- Discuss WASACRE's code of practice and constitution.
- Support the request for the book 'In the Beginning' to be re-printed and translated into Welsh.
- Discuss what SACRE members would find useful in SACRE Annual Reports produced by ACCAC.

Consideration was given to the report attached to the agenda papers that outlined the proposed amendments to the constitution and after discussion, members agreed to support the following changes in respect of Section 3 – Membership and Duties and Section 4 - Officers of the Association:-

Section 3 - Membership and Duties

It was agreed to support the proposal to amend paragraph (v) to read:-

'Each member SACRE shall be entitled to send up to four representatives which could include one from each of the member groups and professional representation (e.g. SACRE Clerk/RE Adviser), to meetings. Each SACRE will be entitled to one vote.'

Section 4 – Officers of the Association

It was agreed to support the proposal to amend paragraph (iii) to read:-

'There shall be an Executive Committee, which shall consist of the officers together with six members elected from the representatives of member SACREs other than those from which the officers have been nominated. With the exception of officers no one SACRE may provide more than one member of the Executive in any one year. The immediate past Secretary shall be invited to attend and to contribute to meetings of the Executive Committee. Members of the Executive Committee, subject to the requirements of paragraph 4(ii) and 4(v), shall serve for a period of three years, according to a rota whereby two of their number shall complete their period of office each year.'

It was also noted that following the last meeting, the Clerk had written to Lion Publishing asking for consideration to be given to reprinting the book 'In the Beginning' and to also consider providing a Welsh version. A response had been received thanking SACRE for its interest, but indicating that the book was now out of print in English and was not published in Welsh. The letter also indicated that the letter would be forwarded to the company's publishing partners in Wales to ask them if they would be interested in translating and publishing the title in the Welsh language.

13. REPRESENTATION AT WASACRE - 11TH NOVEMBER 2003

It was noted that the next WASACRE meeting would be held in Cardiff on 11th November. The Chairman reported that he would be unable to attend this meeting but Councillor D.M. Gray and Mr Brooks indicated their intention to attend. Mrs V. Thomas would also attend.

14. CORRESPONDENCE

The Chairman reported on the following items of correspondence:-

- Letter from ESTYN regarding the factual inaccuracy in the Giffach Fargoed Primary School Inspection Report.
- Letter from the Headteacher at Risca Community Comprehensive School reporting that all the issues identified in the School Action Plan had been addressed. The Headteacher also asked for if SACRE had any materials, literature and exemplar assemblies to boost the school's present resources. It was agreed that details of the website would be circulated to all schools.
- Letter from Lion Publishing thanking SACRE for its interest in the book entitled 'In the Beginning', but indicating that the book was now out of print in English and was not published in Welsh. The letter also stated that the letter would be forwarded to the company's publishing partners in Wales to ask them if they would be interested in translating and publishing the title in the Welsh language.
- Letter from ACCAC asking for nominations from SACRE to take part in an exercise to update ACCAC's guidance on the structure and format of SACRE Annual Reports - Mr Brooks indicated his willingness to attend and Mrs Thomas indicated that either she or her colleague, Miss Carys Thomas would also participate.

The meeting closed at 4.15 p.m.

CHAIRMAN