

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CAERPHILLY STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE TREDOMEN BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY CENTRE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 17TH MARCH 2004 AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Mrs K.R. Baker, D.M. Gray and J. Taylor

Representing Teacher Associations

Mrs. C. Anthony (NAHT), Miss H. Bartley (ATL) and Mrs. E. Hawthorn (VALRETTA)

Representing Religious Organisations

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

Together with:

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

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs A. Collins, K.R. Snell and R.W. Gough, Miss N. Jones (NUT) Mrs S. John (UCAC), S. Davies (SHA), Mrs M. Wade (United Reform Wales) and Captain J. Jepson (Salvation Army).

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

The Chairman reported that Captain Julie Jepson had recently given birth to a baby girl. Members expressed their congratulations and it was agreed to send a card to the family on behalf of SACRE.

It was also reported that Mrs Anthony would shortly be taking early retirement. On behalf of SACRE, the Chairman thanked Mrs Anthony for the valuable contribution she had made as a member of SACRE and members wished her well in her retirement.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2. MINUTES

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

Minutes of the meeting of Caerphilly SACRE held on 4th December 2003

3. UPDATE ON MEMBERSHIP

It was noted that with Mrs. Anthony's retirement, there would be a resultant NAHT vacancy. There was also a vacancy for a NASUWT representative and the Clerk offered to progress this issue.

4. REVIEW OF AGREED SYLLABUS FOR RE

Mrs. Thomas outlined the legal requirement for SACREs to review their agreed syllabus every five years. The current syllabus had come into force in the Autumn Term 2000 and therefore a process of review now needed to be undertaken. In accordance with this, all infant, junior, primary, special and secondary schools had been sent a questionnaire to complete during the Autumn Term 2003.

The report outlined the results of the questionnaire and Mrs Thomas provided details of the following main findings –

Main Findings (Primary)

Questionnaires had been sent to 305 primary schools in the counties of Bridgend, Caerphilly, Merthyr and Rhondda Cynon Taff. 73 responses had been received, representing a 23.9% response rate. However, it was noted that the 305 schools surveyed had included Church schools and Mrs. Thomas agreed to clarify the figures and report back to the next meeting.

Mrs. Thomas reported that at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 there had been overwhelming satisfaction with the current syllabus and the report detailed the comments made.

Having regard to the responses received, the following course of action was recommended for the primary sector –

- To make no **major** changes to the current requirements for Key Stage 1 but to consider **minor** modifications where it is deemed necessary and make recommendations. Guidance to be reviewed in the light of any changes that may occur as a result of the move to a Foundation Phase which will encompass early years and Key Stage 1
- To make no **major** changes to the current requirements for Key Stage 2 but to consider **minor** modifications where it is deemed necessary and make recommendations
- To ensure that the document Exemplification of Standards in RE at Key Stages 1
- and 2 is circulated to schools as soon as possible to support teachers in the
- assessment process and raise awareness of the document with co-ordinators and
- headteachers

Main Findings (Secondary)

Questionnaires had been sent to 49 secondary schools in the counties of Bridgend, Caerphilly, Merthyr and Rhondda Cynon Taff and 27 responses had been received, representing a 55.1% response rate.

Mrs. Thomas reported that at Key Stage 3, the responses had indicated considerable satisfaction with the current syllabus.

At Key Stage 4 it was noted that there was currently a requirement to follow the WJEC Short Course in Religious Studies Specification B (Option A) to fulfil the statutory requirement for Religious Education. Some responses indicated that schools would welcome the opportunity to widen the choice to include a wider choice of specification and examination board and this request had been reflected in the recommendations.

At Key Stage 5 there was a general satisfaction with the current syllabus. However, it was noted that this was an area that would require some detailed revision, particularly in the light of the significant number of secondary schools not complying with statutory requirements in the sixth form.

Having regard to the responses received from the secondary sector, the following recommendations were proposed –

Key Stage 3

- To retain the current requirement of number and balance of religions and organisation into Core and Extension units
- To review the requirements of the CORE and EXTENSION units and make recommendations
- To examine the requirements for assessment tasks at Key Stage 3 especially in Year 9 and make recommendations

Key Stage 4

- To retain the requirement to follow a short course at KS4
- To consider offering schools a wider choice of specification and examination board

Key Stage 5

- To consider the current sixth form provision and make recommendations
- That guidance be offered to schools that offer more creative ways of providing RE at post 16.

The Chairman thanked Mrs. Thomas and her colleagues for the analysis of the questionnaire results and it was agreed to constitute a Working Party to review the agreed syllabus during the Spring Term 2004 and to accept the recommendations detailed above for the primary and secondary sector as the Working Party's brief.

5. WASACRE – FEEDBACK FROM THE MEETING HELD AT ABERAERON ON 5TH MARCH 2004

Consideration was given to the report that provided information on the discussions and deliberations at the WASACRE meeting held at Aberaeron on 5th March. Mrs. Thomas drew attention to the proposed amendments to the Constitution and reported that SACREs had been invited to submit nominations for new Executive members by 30th March.

The Chairman reminded the meeting that Councillor Gray had been elected as an Executive member until July 2004 and to ensure consistency, SACRE members agreed to re-nominate him to serve for a full term on the Executive.

6. THE WELSH BACCALAUREATE: IMPLICATIONS FOR RE

Mrs Thomas reported that at the last WASACRE meeting, Richard Carter from the WJEC had made a presentation that outlined the aims, key characteristics and structure of the new Welsh Baccalaureate qualification. At the meeting, Mr Carter had acknowledged that no mention had been made of RE in the specifications but outlined opportunities to develop RE through the key issues of Wales, Europe and the World, personal and social education and through community participation.

WASACRE members had expressed their disappointment that there was no specific reference to RE and spiritual development in the qualification and it was agreed that the WASACRE secretary would write to each SACRE asking them to contact relevant bodies to express their concern.

Consideration was given then given to the document entitled 'Wales, Europe and The World' (including Language Module), copies of which were circulated at the meeting and Mrs. Thomas reported that she had identified exemplars where she felt that RE could be incorporated into the modules and their components.

Following discussion, it was agreed that Mrs. Thomas would write to Mr. Carter expressing SACRE's concern that there was no explicit mention of RE in the curriculum content of the Welsh Baccalaureate and commenting on the fact that there was also no mention or reminder to schools that maintained schools must deliver RE at post 16. In addition, Mrs. Thomas agreed to forward some specific examples of the way that RE could contribute to the modules – Wales, Europe and the World and Personal and Social Education.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

The Chairman reported that the following items of correspondence had been received:–

- A copy of Swansea SACRE's Annual report 2003/2004;
- A letter from Paul Morgan, Managing HMI at Estyn thanking the Director of Education and Leisure for sending him a copy of Caerphilly SACRE's Annual Report and commenting in particular on the constructive way in which SACRE had analysed, presented and considered inspection reports and examination data;
- A letter from the WASACRE Secretary confirming that Caerphilly SACRE would be hosting a meeting of WASACRE on Friday, 19th November 2004
- Mrs Thomas reported that she would be unable to attend the ACCAC Working Party meeting on 23rd March to examine the content of SACRE Annual Reports. However, she had forwarded comments and had advised ACCAC to contact Mr Brooks who had also agreed to serve on the Working Party

8. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled to be held on Monday, 14th June. The Clerk however, drew attention to the forthcoming local elections on 10th June and reported that the Council's Annual General Meeting, which appointed Members to committees, sub committees etc would not be held until 24th June. In view of this, it was agreed to hold the next SACRE meeting on Monday, 7th June.

Consideration was then given to a venue and it was suggested that the meeting could be held in a primary school to give SACRE members the opportunity to observe a school assembly.

Tiryberth Primary School Was mentioned and Ms. Cole agreed to contact the Headteacher and make the necessary arrangements. The Clerk would then advise SACRE members of the time of the meeting.

The meeting closed at 3.35 p.m.