



CAERPHILLY STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – 25TH SEPTEMBER 2007

SUBJECT: TO INFORM THE SACRE OF THE DISCUSSIONS AND DELIBERATIONS OF WASACRE AGM HELD ON 28TH JUNE 2007

REPORT BY: ESIS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report is to inform members of the discussions and deliberations of WASACRE's annual general meeting held on 28th June 2007 at Llandrindod Wells, Powys.

2. MAIN ISSUES SUMMARY

2.1 Matters arising

2.1.1 Collective Worship Post 16

WASACRE are still awaiting clarification regarding extending the right for post 16 pupils to withdraw from collective worship in the Education and Inspection Act 2006. A letter has been sent to WAG asking if the act has been enabled in Wales.

2.1.2 Presentation: Faith Gardens – St Christopher's Special School, Wrexham

Members received a presentation about the Faith Garden that has been developed at St Christopher's Special School, Wrexham. Chris Pittaway (deputy headteacher) and three pupils from St Christopher's Special School outlined the development of the garden with reference to how each aspect represents the six principal religions of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism. The garden includes:

- A pergola with the posts representing the different religions and the cross bars representing the interlinking environment
- Mosaic tiles created by the pupils
- Symbols of the six faiths engraved into a stone
- Six different groups of plants associated with each religion
- Statues representing the six religions
- Faith banners
- Bilingual plaques with information about the six religions

A series of worksheets have been devised by the school and these are available for KS2 and KS3 pupils from other schools to use when they visit the garden. Boxes of artefacts on the six principal religions are also available at the school.

2.2 Feedback from Executive Committee

2.2.1 RE at Post 16

The National Advisers Panel for Religious Education is continuing to work on ways of encouraging provision of RE at Post 16. Further information about the project will be available at a later meeting.

2.2.2 Correspondence

Concerns were raised by a number of SACREs that some of the correspondence sent on behalf of those SACREs were not listed on the correspondence list. The secretary noted that she had encountered problems with her e-mail. It was agreed that SACREs would send another set of papers / letters to the Secretary.

2.2.3 So you're joining your local SACRE

Further copies of the document 'So you're joining you local SACRE' are now available from the secretary.

2.2.4 'Sexual Orientation Discrimination Bill'

The 'Sexual Orientation Discrimination Bill' was discussed by the Executive Committee and the following statement was drafted as a response:

- The consultation period for the Bill is now over;
- The impact of the Bill on Religious Education is likely to be limited given that Religious Education, by its nature engages with a wide range of views, opinions and beliefs, and is – by statute – non-indoctrinatory;
- Education in general, and Religious Education in particular, value diversity, and would wish to preserve freedom of choice in matters of belief;
- WASACRE, and all SACREs, would also wish to reject all forms of discrimination;
- The prime concern for SACREs and for WASACRE, is the delivery of RE in accordance with the locally Agreed Syllabus and the National Exemplar Framework for RE – all of which are well informed.

2.3 The Croeso Project

Members were informed about the work of 'The Croeso Project', an initiative of The Commission for Racial Equality that is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government. The project aims to celebrate the diverse culture of Wales and to promote understanding of language, faith, community and inclusion. Current projects include:

- A peer-led education programme
- A touring Paul Robeson exhibition
- The 'Croeso' website
- Themed workshops on Diversity and Equality, Migration and Refugee and Asylum-seeker issues
- The creation of collective worship resources to support the United Nation International Day for the elimination of racial discrimination (March 21st).

Representatives from the project welcomed ideas on further topics that could be delivered within the context of Religious Education.

2.4 Meeting with the Minister

It was noted that WASACRE had written to request a meeting with the Minister with responsibility for Education. Possible issues to raise with the minister were discussed and included RE in the Foundation Phase, inclusion of RE in the Better Schools Fund, funding for teacher training on Collective Worship and commissioning of new RE resources.

2.5 Estyn

Concerns were raised by members regarding an article in the Western Mail stating that some inspectors were timing opportunities for reflection during acts of collective worship and lessons. It was agreed to write to Estyn to seek clarification regarding reflection and the guidance that had been issued to inspectors.

2.6 Election of Officers

Mary Parry (Camarthenshire SACRE) and Tania ap Sion (Wrexham SACRE) were elected to the executive committee.

The chair expressed his thanks to the other persons nominated and especially to Cllr Michael Grey and Cllr Morfydd Jones for their contribution to the executive committee.

2.7 Treasurer's Report

The Statements of Accounts for 2006-07 was presented by the Treasurer. It was agreed that the annual subscription per SACRE for membership of WASACRE, during the 2007-08 financial year, would be set at £368, which represents an uplift of 3% on the 2006-07 subscription (£357).

2.8 Constitution

Concerns were raised by some SACREs regarding amendments to the constitution. It was agreed to ask the Executive Committee to give further consideration to the constitution and for it to be presented again at the next AGM.

2.9 Review of the Year

The Review was approved for circulation to all SACREs.

2.10 Date of Next Meetings

- 4th December 2007 – Ebbw Vale (Blaenau Gwent)
- 14th March 2008 – Carmarthen
- 26th June 2008 – Mold (Flintshire)

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the discussions and deliberations of WASACRE.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 Draft copy of the minutes of the WASACRE AGM held on 28th June 2007