



CAERPHILLY STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT BEDWAS HIGH SCHOOL, CAERPHILLY
ON TUESDAY, 29TH SEPTEMBER 2009 AT 2.00 PM**

PRESENT:

Councillor D.M. Gray - Chairman

Councillors:

Mrs. A. Collins, Mrs R. Potter

Representing Teacher Organisations:

Mrs. N. Boardman (NUT), Ms K. Mathias (VALRETA), Mrs S.A. Rivers (ASCL)

Representing Religious Organisations:

Mr. D. Brooks (Independent), Mrs E. Hawthorn (United Reform Church)

Together with:

V. Thomas (ESIS Religious Education Advisor), J. Lawrence (Assistant Director, Learning, Education and Inclusion), R. Thomas (Committee Services Officer)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D.G. Carter, Mrs. D. Price, J. Taylor, Miss H. Bartley (ATL), Mrs C. Thompson (NAHT).

1. CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Mrs A. Collins to her first meeting of the Caerphilly SACRE.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Rivers for the hospitality and warm welcome received by the school and for allowing the Committee to meet at Bedwas High School.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the beginning or during the meeting.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that subject to the inclusion of Mr D. Brooks' attendance, the following minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

- Caerphilly SACRE held on 8th June 2009 (minute nos. 1 - 19 on page nos. 1 - 5).

MATTERS ARISING

4. Analysis of Inspection Reports (Minute No. 9)

Mrs. V. Thomas advised the Committee that an analysis of inspection report each term may be unworkable but would be given at least twice a year. An analysis of reports would be discussed at the next meeting of the Committee.

Mrs. V. Thomas advised the Committee that she had visited Risca Comprehensive, and reported that the school was making good progress since the inspection.

5. Religious Education Guidance for 14 to 19-Year-Olds, DCELLS (Minute No. 11)

The Committee noted that guidance for Post 16 religious education studies had been issued.

6. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CONFERENCES – PRESENTATION BY BEDWAS HIGH SCHOOL'S 6TH FORM

The Committee received a presentation by Anna Jones, Head of Religious Education, together with 6th form pupils on conferences undertaken during the Autumn and Summer term.

Members were advised each conference had a topic. The first conference was led by Matt Lewis of Damarius on the President for a Day Experience and developed pupils' skills of decision making and collaborative working. The second conference related to ethical and moral behaviour and was organised and taken by in-house providers. Each conference gave the pupils different tasks to complete and opportunities to use various skills, (such as decision making, team work, reflection etc) with pupils receiving accreditations for each skill used.

Both Ms. Jones and the pupils agreed the conferences were successful and engaging to all present. Both received excellent pupil attendance and helped develop pupils' skills and increased their confidence in public speaking.

Based on these successes, a further conference had been booked for 19th October 2009 on the topic "A Question of Faith" and another Damaris conference on 'Ethics in an Age of Science' was scheduled for the near future. In addition, there was an annual arts competition taking place, opportunity to attend Trinity College conferences and greater working collaboration with other departments within the school.

Members had an opportunity to question the pupils and Ms Jones, who stated although costly, the conferences offered value for money when taking into consideration the outcome and the impact of the lesson in comparison with a school classroom environment.

The Chairman thanked Anna Jones for her informative presentation, together with Josh Jones, Tom Dunn, Jade Babbington and Cara Jones (pupils from the 6th form). Thanks were also given to Janet Williams, Head of the Schools Catering Department, for the buffet that had been supplied.

Ms. Jones stayed for the remainder of the meeting.

7. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2009 – 2010

Members discussed the dates and venues within the report and confirmed the availability of buildings for forthcoming meetings. The schedule for future meetings was agreed as follows:

- Thursday, 10th December 2009 (2.00 pm) – Penallta House, Ystrad Mynach
- Wednesday, 24th February 2010 (2.00 pm) – Twyn Primary School
- Monday, 14th June 2010 (2.00 pm) – United Reform Church, Van Road, Caerphilly

8. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The current membership of the committee was noted. The omission of Mrs. Sue Rivers (ASCL) was highlighted and to be corrected.

Members discussed the inclusion of non-Christian groups on to the committee and acknowledged that previous attempts to secure representation had been unsuccessful. They were informed that there had been some enquiries from a Buddhist group and the Committee responded positively to the possibility of accepting such a group on the committee, provided numbers in the locality were sufficient and that they represented a mainstream branch of Buddhism. In addition a Member of the Committee asked if there was a statistical record of non-Christian faiths within Caerphilly borough. Officers advised they would make enquiries and if possible, send this information onto Members.

Mrs. R. Thomas highlighted recent unsuccessful attempts to find a replacement NASUWT and UCAC representative. Mrs V. Thomas agreed to take this forward.

9. SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2008 – 2009

The draft annual report from Caerphilly SACRE was presented, in which the activities of SACRE during the academic year 2008-2009 were outlined. It follows the guidelines laid down by the former Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS).

Members reviewed the document and were asked for any comments and to confirm the accuracy of its contents.

Members noted and approved the report, that would now be sent to DCELLS, subject to the following amendments:

- (i) representation from a senior manager from the Education Department to be included on Appendix 1; and
- (ii) “All members of the Education Authority” to be deleted from Appendix 7.

10. SACRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2008 – 2010

The report set out Caerphilly SACRE’s Development Plan, which aims to ensure that current and future developments are identified.

The plans hope to promote and support the following:

- the raising of the standards of pupils’ attainment in religious education;
- improvement in the provision of religious education;
- an increase in the number of pupils following external examinations in religious education and religious studies at GCSE and A/AS Level; and
- the highest quality provision of collective worship.

A general discussion followed, and it was agreed to note the content of the Development Plan.

11. INSET NEEDS AND PLANS 2009 – 2010

The report gave details of in service training provided for Caerphilly schools during the academic year 2009-2010. The aim of the training was to promote and support:

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

Members noted the content of the report.

Members were asked to note that the ESIS website would be live shortly and all courses would be accessed from here via 'www.EISIS.org.uk'.

12. ATTENDANCE AT INSET 2008 – 2009

The report informed Members of attendance levels at INSET courses from local authorities.

Members noted the healthy levels of attendance at various courses, in particular Phase 2: Revisiting the agreed syllabus at KS2.

13. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2010

Members were reminded of the annual event, Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD), that takes place on 27th January. Each year concentrates on a particular theme, with 2010 being "The Legacy of Hope".

Members were asked to note that this year the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust had produced a leaflet and website information (www.hmd.org.uk) to assist schools and organisations who wished to commemorate the day. Organisations that did commemorate the day are invited to inform the Welsh Assembly, so that their activity can be recorded and acknowledged.

Anna Jones (Bedwas High School) advised that she intended to organise a conference for Year 10 to commemorate the day and Members of the Committee asked if they could receive an update. This was agreed.

Members were reminded of the meeting with the Minister for Education in November 2008 in which she was asked to help fund visits to Auschwitz by Welsh school children, alongside their English counterparts. The Minister had confirmed that funding for the visits had come from central government and no decisions had been made about funding for 2008-09. However due to public pressure, funding for Welsh pupils to take part in the LfA project was being considered and discussions are already underway with the Director of the project.

Members discussed the report and requested clarification as to the available funding for Welsh pupils to visit Auschwitz. Mrs V. Thomas agreed to ascertain the level and criteria of the funding available.

Members noted the report and agreed the following:

- (i) to write to schools reminding them of HMD and ask them to commemorate it in some way; and
- (ii) to advise schools of the resources available via the HMD Trust website.

14. WASACRE - FEEDBACK FROM MEETING ON 24TH JUNE 2009 AT WILD PHEASANT HOTEL, LLANGOLLEN

Copies of the draft minutes of WASACRE's meeting held on 24th June 2009 at Llangollen were circulated at the meeting.

Members reviewed a summary of the meeting of WASACRE, whilst Mrs V. Thomas gave a verbal report on particular items of interest to the committee. In particular Mrs Thomas praised the presentations given by Vicky Barlow of Wrexham Local Authority and Gavin Craigen, Chief Moderator of the WJEC (Welsh Joint Education Committee).

The Chairman thanked Mrs V. Thomas for her feedback from the meeting. Teacher representatives on the Committee raised their concerns regarding a lack of paid cover for all absences, stating this was affecting all schools and teacher representation. It was agreed that this concern would be raised at the next meeting of WASACRE.

15. WASACRE - REPRESENTATION AT NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is to be held on 13th November 2009 in Rhondda Cynon Taff. Caerphilly SACRE's representatives were agreed as Mrs V. Thomas, Councillor D.M. Gray and Mr D. Brooks (subject to confirmation).

Other Members interested in attending were requested to contact Mrs R. Thomas after the meeting to confirm their availability.

Members were also given advance notice of a future meeting of WASACRE, taking place in November 2010 at Penallta House, Tredomen Park, Ystrad Mynach.

16. CORRESPONDENCE

- (1) Religious Education News, Summer 2009, No. 84 - It was agreed copies would be distributed to all members following the meeting. An additional copy was to be sent to Anna Jones, Head of Religious Education at Bedwas High School;
- (2) "Over The Stile"- A CD of Reflective Music for School Worship – Members noted the contents of the report and appendix;
- (3) Religious Education Movement Wales, Annual Report 2008/2009 – Members noted the report and that a copy of the report was available from the authority's resource centre.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at the Ebbw Room, Penallta House, Tredomen Park, Ystrad Mynach at 2.00 p.m. on Thursday, 10th December 2009.

The meeting closed at 3.50 pm.

Approved as a correct record, and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 2009, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN