



CAERPHILLY STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN PARK
ON THURSDAY, 10TH DECEMBER 2009 AT 2.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor D.M. Gray – Chairman
Councillor J. Taylor – Vice-Chairman

Representing Teacher Organisations:

Miss H. Bartley (ATL), Mrs K. Mathias (VALRETA), Mrs C. Thompson (NAHT)

Representing Religious Organisations:

Mrs E. Hawthorn (United Reform Church), Mrs J. Jones (Church in Wales)

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. A. Collins, Mrs. R. Potter, and Mrs. D. Price. Mr D. Brooks (Independent), Mrs. N. Boardman (NUT), Mrs. S.A. Rivers (ASCL).

1. CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and read a short poem entitled "Live Christmas Every Day".

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of Caerphilly SACRE held on 29th September 2009 (minute nos. 1 - 17 on page nos. 1 - 5), be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING

4. Committee Membership (Minute No. 8)

Members were advised a letter is to be sent to all primary schools to invite members of NASUWT and UCAC, with an RE background, to join the committee. Mrs. Lawrence suggested the correspondence be added to the schools' information bulletin to highlight the invitation.

Members thanked Mrs. R. Thomas for the data circulated to all members on the number of non-Christian faiths within the Caerphilly county borough.

5. Holocaust Memorial Day 2010 (Minute No. 13)

Members were reminded that recently the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) had been lobbied to fund the inclusion of 6th form pupils from schools in Wales to visit Auschwitz for a day, alongside their English counterparts.

WAG had now agreed to fund this and a leaflet detailing the event was circulated at the meeting. The leaflet advised the project, entitled Lessons from Auschwitz (LFA), would be offered to two students aged 16 to 18 from schools and colleges across Wales. On Sunday 7th March there will be an orientation seminar, with the visit taking place on Thursday 11th March and a follow-up seminar on Tuesday 23rd March.

After the follow-up seminar, participants will become "Ambassadors" for the LFA project by completing a project of their choosing, aimed at disseminating the lessons they have learned in their schools and communities.

The Committee recommended the leaflet be sent to all secondary schools with a 6th form and colleges in the Caerphilly County Borough Council.

6. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2010 - UPDATE

The report informed Members of holocaust issues and action taken since the last meeting of the committee. 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 a letter had been sent to all schools advising them of the HMD and also the availability of HMD resources on the website. In addition to this, schools were informed that Cardiff local authority was to host an Anne Frank exhibition. Mrs. V. Thomas confirmed she had heard very good reports of the exhibition, however teacher representatives commented that it had been hard to attend as it was difficult to take children out of school.

Members noted the recent action taken by Officers.

7. ANALYSIS OF EXAMINATION RESULTS 2009

Details of the results on a 'school by school' basis were circulated at the meeting.

Members reviewed the analysis of examination results for 2009. The main findings of each document were discussed and placed in the context of percentage of Cohort entered for GCSE and A-AS level.

A trend of very good performance at GCSE full course, that is better than previous performance and All Wales figures at all grade boundaries, were noted, in addition to the following:

- a trend of increased exam entries for GCSE Short Course with standards comparable to previous performance and only slightly below All Wales figures at all grade boundaries.
- A Level results are excellent particularly at grades A-C and A-E. Schools are to be commended for consistently attaining good results year on year.
- at all grade boundaries AS results are very good and better than the All Wales figures.

The Chairman thanked the school teachers that were present, together with Mrs. Lawrence and Mrs V. Thomas for their support to schools and in helping them achieve the excellent results.

Members noted the examination results and agreed to write to congratulate schools on maintaining such good results.

8. TEACHER ASSESSMENT IN LEVELS AT KEY STAGE 3 (2008-2009)

Members reviewed the 2009 key stage 3 (KS3) teacher assessment analysis, and were reminded that there were no national levels for KS3 and therefore no RE comparisons were available. However four local education authorities (Caerphilly, Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taff), did collate data for comparative purposes.

Members discussed the report and noted a dip across the board in 2009 compared with 2008. This would be kept under review by ESIS but Mrs. V. Thomas also referred to the Securing Teacher Assessment at KS3 external monitoring by WJEC DCELLS that is currently being piloted and will roll out to all schools from next year. This should ensure judgments on standards are secure. In addition, it was noted the gap in performance between boys and girls at L5+ and L6+ had narrowed in 2008 and the same gap has been maintained or improved in 2009.

Members noted the report.

9. INSPECTION REPORTS ANALYSIS

The report and attached appendices, informed Members of Estyn's findings regarding Religious Education and Religious Studies (and collective worship) in Wales, Spring 2009 – Summer 2009. In the context of the inspection reports for this period, standards in Caerphilly schools were good.

Members discussed the report at length and commented on the pleasing results, in particular in regards to Bedwas Junior School. Members asked that the Headteacher of Bedwas Junior be contacted to ask if they would be willing to host a meeting of SACRE at some future date with a short presentation from the RE co-ordinator to share best practice and identify the outstanding features mentioned in the inspection report.

Members also commented on previous issues relating to the recording of statutory requirements. Concern was raised that under the new inspection framework, currently being piloted, that the reporting of a non-fulfilment of statutory requirements would not be sufficiently 'flagged up' as a key issue. Mrs V. Thomas assured members that WASACRE has already received a mandate and motion from member SACRE's for WASACRE to raise this issue with Estyn.

Members noted the report.

10. WASACRE - FEEDBACK FROM MEETING ON 13TH NOVEMBER 2009

The report gave members of the committee a summary of WASACRE's meeting held on 13th November 2009 in Rhondda Cynon Taff. In addition, Mrs. V. Thomas presented a verbal report on particular items of interest.

Mrs. V. Thomas gave an overview of the three presentations given to WASACRE and members raised their concern at the contents of Joanne Glenn's presentation on 'All Wales Community Cohesion Strategy'. They felt this was more political than educational and did not relate to the classroom environment. Members were assured that all WASACRE members had raised the same concern on the day. On a positive note, grants would be given to support teachers to deal with controversial issues as part of the RESilience project funded by WAG. The exact criteria for funding was unknown at this stage but an update will be given at the next meeting of Caerphilly SACRE. A questionnaire would be sent to a sample of schools and mentoring support would be available for those that needed it.

The Chairman thanked Mrs. V. Thomas for her feedback from the meeting.

11. WASACRE - REPRESENTATION AT NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is to be held on 18th March 2010 in Swansea. Caerphilly SACRE's representatives were agreed as Mrs. V. Thomas and Councillor D.M. Gray.

Other Members interested in attending were requested to advise Mrs. R. Thomas at the next meeting of Caerphilly SACRE.

12. CORRESPONDENCE

- (1) The Church in Wales, Education Review – Members noted the report and that a copy of the report was available from the authority's resource centre.
- (2) The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion – an e-mail dated 30th November 2009 with accompanying flyer for a short course in 'Science and Religion in Schools' was circulated at the meeting.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at The Twyn Primary School, Caerphilly at 2.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 24th February 2010.

In closing the meeting, Chairman Councillor D.M. Gray wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and thanked everyone for their hard work during 2009.

The meeting closed at 3:27 p.m.

Approved as a correct record, and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 24th February 2010, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN