



CAERPHILLY STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT UNITED REFORMED CHURCH, CAERPHILLY
ON WEDNESDAY, 6TH DECEMBER 2010 AT 2:00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor D.M. Gray – Chairman

Councillors:

J. Taylor and Mrs R. Potter

Representing Teacher Organisations:

Miss H. Bartley (ATL), Mrs C. Thomas (NAHT)

Representing Religious Organisations:

Mrs E. Hawthorn (United Reformed Church)

Together with:

V. Thomas (ESIS Religious Education Advisor), J. Lawrence (Assistant Director, Learning, Education and Inclusion), D. Ralph (VALREC) and E. Sullivan (Committee Services Officer)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P.C.W. Bailie, D. Carter, Mrs A. Collins, and Mrs N.L. Boardman (NUT), Mrs B. Davies (UCAC), Mrs K. Mathias (VALRETA), Mrs S. Rivers (ASCL), Mrs D. Williams (NASUWT), Mr D. Brooks (Independent), Mr T. Crosse (St Helens RC Primary School), Mrs J. Jones (Church in Wales) and Captain R. Waters (Salvation Army)

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

Mrs Hawthorn escorted Members on a brief tour of the church and updated them on the progress of the ongoing restoration programme as well as its historical background.

The Chairman thanked Enfys Hawthorn, United Reformed Church and SACRE member, for allowing the Council to meet at the United Reformed Church, Caerphilly and for the lovely refreshments provided.

The Chairman read a short poem by Helen Steiner Rice entitled "A Christmas Prayer".

The Chairman expressed his thanks to Rebecca Thomas for all her support and assistance in the past and welcomed Emma Sullivan the new Clerk to SACRE.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Caerphilly SACRE meeting, held on 29th September 2010 (minute nos. 1 - 18 on page nos. 1 - 6) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING

3. National RE Festival (Minute No. 13)

Members were informed that an RE Festival Event celebrating Religious Education in Wales as part of the National RE Festival will be held at Ty Dysgu (ESIS Building), Treforest on Thursday 10th March 2011. The event gives SACRE representatives from four local authorities the opportunity to meet with schools from Bridgend, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taff as they showcase good practice in RE and will include contributions in music, song and dance. Refreshments are available from 3:30pm with the event starting at 4:00pm and promises to be a very enjoyable and worthwhile experience. The Chairman encouraged all Members to take up the invitation and make every effort to attend. In order to assist the organisation process it was agreed that letters be sent to all Members requesting confirmation of attendance.

4. Caerphilly Community Cohesion Forum (Minute No. 18)

Members requested that if agreeable with Janet Jones, feedback from the Caerphilly Community Cohesion Forum be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

5. PRESENTATION ON VALLEYS REGIONAL EQUALITY COUNCIL (VALREC)

The Chairman welcomed Mr Darren Ralph, Development Officer for the Valleys Regional Equality Council (VALREC) to the meeting.

The presentation gave Members an overview of VALREC, its origins and development and how it was working with both organisations and individuals to eliminate discrimination, strengthen good relations within communities and protect human rights.

The Development Officer outlined the organisations services including consultation and awareness training, project and casework. Through its case and project work VALREC actively promotes equality and diversity. By sharing information with South Wales and Gwent Police the organisation hopes to eradicate hate crime and encourage community cohesion.

Working with the Heads of Religious Education in schools, VALREC has been able to deliver lessons on different faiths, encouraging children to ask questions and so build a greater understanding and appreciation of different faiths.

The Development Officer concluded the presentation by welcoming questions from Members.

A Member asked if VALREC had contact with the different religious groups in the area. The Development Officer confirmed that a mapping exercise had been undertaken as part of the Voice of the Valleys initiative and the resulting database file can be accessed via VALREC.

The Chairman thanked Mr Ralph on behalf of SACRE for taking the time out of his busy schedule to attend today and expressed his appreciation for the all the time and effort that had obviously gone into such an interesting and thought provoking presentation.

6. ANALYSIS OF EXAMINATION RESULTS 2010

The report informed Members of the examination results for Religious Studies in 2010 at GCSE Full Course, GCSE Short Course, GCSE A Level and GCSE AS Level. The report also outlined the Cohort Entry for Full and Short Course examinations.

GCSE Full Course

There were 575 entries from 11 schools, which showed a decrease in entry numbers and schools entering over 2009. The overall percentage of students achieving A*-G grades for Caerphilly was 99.8% and shows a year on year improvement. This is directly comparable with the All Wales figure of 99%.

Improvements had also been noted at Grades A* to C and A*-A, where a consistent number of pupils achieved this top grade over a three year period.

GCSE Short Course

There were 1295 entries from 12 schools in 2010, which showed a consistent number of schools were entering for the short course. The best overall percentage performance over the last three years was noted at A*-C (58.5%) and A*-A (22%).

All results were comparable with or better than previous performance and the All Wales figures. Members were asked to bear in mind that this course is not an option but a statutory requirement and were pleased to see that 96.4% of pupils had received some kind of accreditation for their studies at KS4.

GCSE A Level

There were more entries for A Level this year with an additional school entering pupils and although pupils achievement at A*-A grade at 20.5% was below 2009 performance it was still comparable with the All Wales figure.

The percentage pass rate for grades A*-C at 84.9% was below 2009 performance, however it did exceed the All Wales figure of 78.5%.

Members noted that the percentage pass rate for grade A*-E was very good again this year at 97.3% and commended schools for consistently attaining good results year on year.

GCSE AS Level

There were a total of 122 candidates from 9 schools for the AS examination, illustrating a year on year rise and also sees an increase in the number of schools entering for AS.

Pass rates for A-E grades at a 95.5% significantly exceeded the All Wales figure of 83% and were also comparable with last year's very good result. Passes at A-C also exceeded the All Wales figure and although the pass rate at A grade was below 2009 performance it also exceeded the All Wales figure.

Cohort Entry

All Wales Cohort Entry was confirmed at 24% for the full course and 49% for the short course. Members were pleased to note the significant increase in the number of entries at all ability levels.

Members were informed that the results for Crosskeys College had not been included in the figures presented- because the college had failed to send the data in time - however, Mrs. V. Thomas advised that this data would be available at the next meeting.

Members noted the contents of the report and congratulated schools on maintaining such good results.

7. TEACHER ASSESSMENT IN LEVELS AT KEY STAGE 3

Members were informed that pupils are assessed using information gathered during the course of Key Stage 3 and all schools had responded.

An improvement in results in 2010 over 2009 at L5+ was noted, with results at L6+ remaining unchanged.

Members were advised that a gender performance gap of 16% at L5+ had been identified in 2010, however it was acknowledged that this trend was being mirrored in other subjects.

Members noted the contents of the report and recognised the challenges and improvements in results in 2010.

8. INSPECTION REPORTS ANALYSIS

The report outlined the 2010 Inspection Report Synopsis for Caerphilly Primary Schools. Members were advised of the three different types of inspection included in the report and the five-point grade system used by Estyn.

Spiritual Development was awarded a grade 2 or higher in every school where judgements have been made about SMSC. Two schools were awarded a grade 1, good with outstanding features and two schools were awarded a grade 2, good features and no important shortcomings.

Good features were also noted in relation to Collective Worship in many of the schools inspected, with all legal requirements being met. Positive contributions to pupils' spiritual, moral and personal development were highlighted.

In terms of Religious Education inspectors noted that pupils developed a good knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world religions, they were afforded the opportunity to visit places of worships in the local community and understood the use and significance of religious artefacts. Members were pleased to note that no shortcomings had been identified in the reports where RE was inspected as a subject.

Attention was drawn to the short inspection at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni and the comments in relation to collective worship. Inspectors noted that the school meets the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils, however these periods did not contribute significantly to pupils spiritual development.

Members noted the contents of report and were please to see the many good features detailed by inspectors, the comments in relation to collective worship at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni were acknowledged.

9. MONITORING STANDARDS IN RE (ORAL UPDATE)

Members' attention was drawn to correspondence received from the Presbyterian Church of Wales in relation to the new ESTYN inspection arrangements and how SACRE intends to continue to monitor collective worship and religious education in light of the changes.

Mrs V. Thomas proposed a response to assure the Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Wales that SACRE take their monitoring role very seriously and will endeavour to ensure that the status of RE and collective worship is protected and seen as a making a valuable contribution to the curriculum and ethos of schools. SACRE agreed the response and requested that the concerns raised be included in the items for discussion at the next annual meeting with the Minister in March 2011.

10. WASACRE - FEEDBACK FROM MEETING ON THE 26TH NOVEMBER 2010 AT CAERPHILLY

Councillor M. Gray as Chairman to WASACRE expressed his thanks to Mrs Sandra Aspinall, the Corporate Director Education, Lifelong Learning and Leisure of Caerphilly County Borough Council, Councillor James Fussell, The Worshipful Mayor of Caerphilly County Borough and all the Heads of Service for their contributions to the success of the recent WASACRE meeting. Particular thanks were paid to Rebecca Thomas for all her efforts in the organisation of the event.

Members reviewed a summary of the meeting of WASACRE held on the 26th November 2010 in Caerphilly, whilst Mrs V. Thomas gave a verbal report on particular items of interest to the Council.

The WASACRE Website is now up and running and includes information on projects and events, publications including downloadable copies of agreed syllabi and annual reports. The website will also provide the relevant papers for all WASACRE meetings as well as an archive of past papers.

An update on the progress of the REsilience project was received at WASACRE and Members noted that a further mail-shot would be going out to all Primary Schools in order to encourage further registrations. The target for REsilience in Wales was to have 40 schools involved in the project.

Face to Faith presented an update on the success of their project designed to encourage young people to recognise the similarities between faiths and to respect and deal with the differences between diverse and sometimes conflicting worldviews. Aimed at 11-16 year olds, schools all over the world are involved including one from Wales and it is hoped that further interest from Welsh schools will be attracted in the future.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Thomas for her feedback from the meeting

11. WASACRE - REPRESENTATION AT NEXT MEETING

Mrs V. Thomas advised that the next WASACRE meeting will launch the National RE Festival from Stanwell School, Penarth, Vale of Glamorgan. As this will be a ticketed event Members were asked to confirm their attendance and the number of tickets they required.

The event will start with refreshments at 10.00am; with the WASACRE Meeting element running from 10.30-11.30 am, followed by the formal launch and introduced by The Archbishop of Wales Barry Morgan. The remainder of the day will include contributions in song, music and dance from schools in the Vale of Glamorgan and also input from various faith communities across Wales and comes to an end at around 3.00pm. As this will be a high profile event with press and media coverage WASACRE is keen that all SACRE's are involved in the event in some way and asked that Members please make every effort to attend.

SACRE agreed that letters be sent to all Members informing them of the event and to request confirmation of their attendance and the number of tickets required. All responses to be sent

in the first instance to the Committee Services Officer who will then collate the numbers and forward to Dr Tania Ap Sion.

12. CORRESPONDENCE

- (1) SACRE Annual Report, copies were distributed to all Members and the contents were noted.
- (2) Religious Education News - No.87, copies were distributed to all present and Members were advised that this had been also been circulated to all schools. Members noted the contents.
- (3) Annual Report Religious Education Movement Wales 2009/2010 was circulated for information.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Schedule of forthcoming meetings were confirmed as:

2:00pm on Monday the 14th February 2011 at the Crosskeys Methodist Church, Crosskeys.

2:00pm on Tuesday the 14th June 2011 at Penallta House, Tredomen, Ystrad Mynach.

Members discussed the summer term meeting and agreed that a school venue would be preferable to using the Council Offices. It was proposed that Ysgol Penalltau be approached and if acceptable act as hosts for the June meeting. Mrs J. Lawrence agreed to liaise with the school in this regard and provide feedback at the next meeting. Members noted that this would be first Welsh Medium School to host a SACRE meeting and requested that if at all possible an act of collective worship be organised for the visit.

The meeting closed at 3:30 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 Monday, 14th February 2011, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN