



CAERPHILLY STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT CROSSKEYS METHODIST CHURCH,
CROSSKEYS ON MONDAY, 14TH FEBRUARY 2011 AT 2.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

D. Carter

Representing Teacher Organisations:

Miss H. Bartley (ATL)

Representing Religious Organisations:

Mrs J. Jones (Church in Wales) and Captain Richard Waters (Salvation Army)

Together with:

V. Thomas (ESIS Religious Education Advisor), Reverend K. Kerrchal (Minister Crosskeys Methodist Church) and E. Sullivan (Committee Services Officer)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P.C.W. Bailie, Mrs A. Collins, Mrs. R. Potter 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) and Mrs Christine Thompson (NAHT), Jill Lawrence, Assistant Director Learning, Education and Inclusion.

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

Councillor Gray and the Reverend Kerrchal provided Members with a brief history of the Methodist Church and its origins and escorted members on a short tour of the building.

SACRE members thanked Councillor Gray and the Reverent Kerrchal for allowing them to meet at the Church and for the lovely refreshments provided.

The Chairman opened proceedings with a reading from St Ignatius and Hazel Lindsey's poem 'Teaching, I am Taught'.

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 6th December 2011 (minute nos. 1 - 13 on page nos. 1 - 6) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING

3. Examination Results Crosskeys College (Minute No.6)

The report informed Members of the examination results for Religious Studies in 2010 at Crosskeys College, Mrs V. Thomas apologised that the data presented had not been made available to her in time for the last SACRE meeting.

It was an increase in A Level students taking RE in 2010 was noted, however results had fallen below 2009 performance. At AS level, results at the College were again excellent and although they were below previous performance exceeded both the Local Authority and All Wales figures at all grade boundaries. With 32% achieving A grades, 77% achieving grade A-C and 96% achieving grades A-E.

Members noted and discussed the contents of the report. It was acknowledged that the changes to the course content and the wider range of topics covered had increased student take-up, particularly as a fourth AS Level choice. Examination results continued to be very good with RS becoming one of the strongest subjects at AS Level.

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

Mrs Janet Jones provided an update on the Caerphilly Community Cohesion Forum, and expressed her thanks to Mr John Elliott, Caerphilly County Borough Council for making her so welcome. Mrs Jones was surprised that the Members of the Forum were unaware of SACRE and used this opportunity to raise awareness of its roles and responsibilities. Members were advised that a large part of the forum's discussions centred on the experiences of individuals within communities and primarily related to late night disturbances and the hate crimes and verbal abuse associated with them. The Forum provided a liaison platform between Gwent Police and the Hate Crime Review Group. Mrs Jones found it difficult to equate her representative role for SACRE with the focus of the group and felt that her educational experience was of greater usefulness under these circumstances. Through further discussion with the group she was able to emphasise the very real need for early education and the promotion of diversity awareness through schools, although she felt the groups focus would probably remain unchanged.

SACRE thanked Mrs Jones for attending the forum as their representative and encouraged her to continue to highlight the need for early education in future meetings.

5. Monitoring Standards in RE (Minutes No: 9)

Members were advised that there had been no response from the Presbyterian Church in Wales regarding the letter sent by SACRE on the 10th December 2010.

6. NATIONAL RE FESTIVAL 2011

Mrs Thomas provided a verbal update on the arrangements for the WASACRE National RE Festival Launch on the 2nd of March 2011 and the ESIS RE Festival Event on the 10th March 2011.

The event details were outlined for Members and those attending were confirmed. Mrs. Thomas requested that any additional ticket requirements be emailed to the Committee Service Officer as soon as possible.

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank Mrs Thomas for all her hard work in organising both events.

7. MONITORING OF RE AND COLLECTIVE WORKSHIP IN SCHOOLS

The report informed Members of possible alternative monitoring arrangements in light of the changes to the Estyn Inspection Framework. So that SACRE can continue its role in monitoring collective worship and standards in religious education.

Members were asked to consider the possibility of monitoring RE standards through the school self evaluation process as part of the inspection cycle. A simple pro forma would be an ideal way of capturing the information required and would be flexible enough to be completed pre or post inspection.

In regard to monitoring collective worship, Estyn inspection reports would still provide information relating to non-fulfilment of statutory requirements and some limited information on the provision and quality of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Consideration could also be given to the possibility of monitoring collective worship through the school self-evaluation report during the inspection cycle. SACRE could also continue to capitalise on the opportunities offered by schools to host meetings and in doing so witness acts of collective worship first hand.

Mrs Thomas advised that she had met with RE advisors from other authorities and the use of a tailored pro-forma during the inspection cycle seemed to be the best way forward.

The importance of getting Head Teachers on board was emphasised and it was suggested that a discussion of the pro-forma with a few Headteachers to ascertain its manageability would be vital to its overall success. It was noted that the pro-forma could be circulated, completed and returned electronically.

Members noted the contents of the report and agreed that a pro-forma would be a useful tool to monitor standards in RE and requested a draft copy to be circulated at the next meeting. Members agreed the recommendation to ascertain the response of Head Teachers to the process of monitoring RE and Collective Worship, including manageability of using the suggested pro-forma and requested feedback on any suggestions for improvement.

8. THE RESILIENCE PROJECT

The report informed Members on the current position of the REsilience Project and its aim to develop and deliver a training programme for teachers of RE in order to improve their skills and confidence in addressing the moral issues that can arise in the RE classroom.

A small number of schools in Wales were part of the pilot programme in 2010 and have given feedback on their perceptions and opinions on the project. It was noted that Heolddu Comprehensive School had expressed an interest in enrolling this year and Councillor D. Carter agreed to confirm whether or not the school had actually signed up to the project.

The initiatives use of Mentors in supporting and signposting information for Teachers was highlighted.

Members noted the contents of the report and asked if this resource material would continue to be made available to schools when the project comes to an end. Mrs Thomas hoped that the information would be made more widely available as the Gateway documents were excellent, but was not aware that any decision had been made in this regard.

9. SACRE MEMBERSHIP - CO-OPTED MEMBERS

The report sought Members views on the nomination of Darren Ralph (Development Officer VALREC) as a co-opted member to SACRE.

Members discussed the constitution in regard to co-opted members and agreed that the constitution be amended to allow a maximum of two co-opted members. It was agreed that the expertise that Mr Ralph would bring to SACRE made him an excellent candidate for co-opted membership.

The nomination of Darren Ralph as a co-opted member to SACRE representing VALREC was agreed.

10. WASACRE - REPRESENTATION AT MEETING TO BE HELD ON MARCH 2ND 2011 AT VALE OF GLAMORGAN

Members agreed this agenda item had already been fully covered during the National RE Festival discussions.

11. WASACRE EXECUTIVE

The report informed Members of the request from WASACRE for nominations to its executive.

Members were advised that as Councillor Gray was rescinding his Chairmanship of WASACRE he would be automatically included on the executive membership as an outgoing Chair and as such no further nominations would be sought from the Caerphilly SACRE.

Members discussed and noted the code of practice for the Conduct of Elections.

12. MINUTES OF THE WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES MEETING - 26TH NOVEMBER 2010

Members noted the minutes.

13. CORRESPONDENCE

- (1) Religious Education News - No. 88, copies were distributed to all present and Members were advised that this had also been circulated to all schools. Members noted the contents.
- (2) Annual Report Swansea SACRE 2009-2010 was circulated for information.
- (3) Annual Report Monmouthshire SACRE 2009-2010 was circulated for information.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor D. Carter requested that the Baptist Church, Bargoed be considered as a venue for the Winter Term 2011 meeting. The current remodelling and renovation programme incorporating a library resource centre as well as a place for worship would have been completed by this date. Members agreed the venue and that the 2011-2012 meeting dates would be established during the Summer Term meeting to be held at Ysgol Penalltau on the 14th June 2011.

Miss H. Bartlett advised that Newbridge School would also be happy to host any future meetings, and Councillor J. Taylor confirmed that his Church would also be happy to step in, as a venue should there be any issues with availability.

Members discussed the Summer Term Meeting at Ysgol Penalltau and requested that as the act of collective worship would be in Welsh, approaches be made to the Head Teacher to see if it would be possible to include a short English narrative, simply to outline the theme of the assembly for the benefit of SACRE's non-Welsh speakers.

The meeting closed at 3:15 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 Tuesday, 14th June 2011, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN