



CAERPHELLY STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT HEOLDDU COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL,
BARGOED ON THURSDAY, 29TH SEPTEMBER 2011 AT 2:00PM

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

Mrs A. Blackman and Mrs R. Potter

Representing Teacher Organisations:

Mrs M. L. Boardman (NUT), Miss B. Davies (UCAC) and Mrs C. Thompson (NAHT)

Representing Religious Organisations:

Mrs E. Hawthorn (United Reformed Church) and Mrs J. Jones (Church in Wales)

Co-opted Members

Mr D. Ralph (VALREC)

Together with:

V. Thomas (ESIS Religious Education Advisor) J. Lawrence (Assistant Director Learning, Education and Inclusion), Mrs H. Bookless (Vice Chair of Governors), and E. Sullivan (Committee Services Officer)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D. Carter, Mrs A. Collins, Miss H. Bartley (ATL), Ms K. Mathias (VALRETA), Mrs D. Williams (NASUWT), Mr T. Crosse and Captain R. Waters.

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

Mr Norman Evans, Assistant Headteacher, welcomed SACRE to Heolddu Comprehensive School and introduced Mrs Helen Bookless, Vice Chair of Governors and Link Governor for RE. Mrs Bookless welcomed SACRE on behalf of the Governing Body and outlined her role as Link Governor for RE within the school. Mr Evans thanked Members for giving the school the opportunity of hosting meeting.

The Chair thanked Mr Evans and Mrs Bookless on behalf of SACRE for the warm welcome and for the delicious refreshments particular note was made of the Malteaser Cake, which

was declared to be a speciality of the school.

The Chair opened proceedings with a poem entitled Living Lesson.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that subject to the amendment that the meeting of the 14th June was held at Ysgol Penalltau, Tredomen, Ystrad Mynach, the minutes of the Caerphilly SACRE meeting, held on 14th June 2011 (minute nos. 1 - 12 on page nos. 1 - 6) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING

Members were asked to note that the date of the winter term meeting had been changed to Thursday 8th December 2011.

3. PRESENTATION ON THE RESILIENCE PROJECT

Mrs Catherine Battrick, Head of RE presented a verbal report on the progress of REsilience Project at Heolddu Comprehensive School.

Mrs Battrick confirmed that the school had looked to the REsilience Project as a way to improve the delivery of contentious issues and had focused on two areas that needed resourcing, homosexuality and same sex marriage.

Members noted that a downward trend at KS4 had been identified at the school and in response a new course for lower ability students the Humanities Learning Pathway had been adopted as an alternative to the RE Short Course for these less able pupils. REsilience provided mentoring support and assistance in getting a unit of study together and helped to build teacher confidence. The modular based course uses evidence from course work to obtain the qualification, which can be improved upon in Year 11 by adding further pieces of work.

Clarification was sought on the reaction of pupils to the new course. Mrs Battrick confirmed that students had been very interested from the outset, as the issues had received a lot of television coverage. To compliment the delivery of the module clips from soap operas on the subject had been used to stimulate debate.

An RE theme day is planned as part of sixth form provision for RE and the department is considering Peace and Conflict as a possible theme.

Clarification was sought on what aspects of Peace and Conflict would be approached and if the study would be open ended or concentrated. Mrs Battrick confirmed that they would look to concentrate the module on one option with 'Conflict and Islam' being considered as a possible area of study. Mrs Thomas confirmed that Heolddu was one of the first schools to take up a collaborative arrangement for RE, sharing discussion across schools and hoped that professionals from outside schools would be encouraged to become involved and initiate debate. Mr Darren Ralph felt that this would provide an ideal opportunity to address issues on negative stereotyping and agreed to attend one of the 6th Form workshops, if required.

The Chair thanked Mrs Battrick on behalf of SACRE for her presentation and for taking the time to answer Members questions.

4. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2011-12

The report provided Members with the schedule of SACRE meetings for 2011-2012. The meeting dates were confirmed as:-

- Thursday, September 29th 2011 - 2:00pm - Heolddu Comprehensive School
- Thursday, December 8th 2011 - 2:00pm - Bedwas Junior School (1.30pm for act of collective worship)
- Tuesday, February 20th 2012 - 2:00pm - Bargoed Baptist Church
- Thursday, June 21st 2012 - 2:00pm - Beulah Baptist Church, Abertridwr

Members noted the schedule of meetings for 2011-2012.

5. MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The report provided SACRE with an update on current membership.

It was noted that recent meetings had seen a decline in the attendance of teacher representatives, Mrs Thomas thanked everyone for their attendance today and emphasised the importance of having full teacher representation at meetings as they provided a valued contribution to proceedings.

Members were advised that due to the retirement of Mr Brooks, there was now a vacancy for an independent member and there was also a co-opted member vacancy remaining. Members noted that a suitable nomination to replace Mr Brooks was being sought and it was hoped that further information would be available at the next meeting.

In terms of the co-opted member vacancy it was proposed that this be offered to Mr Phillip Jones, Headteacher at Heolddu Comprehensive School. Mrs Thomas confirmed that at the moment there was no Secondary Headteacher on SACRE and this nomination would secure a valuable headteacher perspective.

Members considered the nomination and resolved that Mr Phillip Jones be offered a Co-opted Membership to SACRE (without voting rights).

Mrs Sullivan agreed to contact Mr Jones following the meeting to confirm his acceptance of the nomination.

6. CAERPHILLY SACRE ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2010-2011

Mrs Thomas outlined the activities of SACRE during the last academic year as detailed within the annual report and Members approval was sought. It was noted that the report followed the guidelines laid down by DCELLs (now DfES) and was to be submitted to DFES by the 30th December 2011.

Members examined the report on a section-by-section basis and highlighted any corrections as and when they occurred.

Mr Darren Ralph noted that VALREC was referred to as the Valleys Racial Equality Council with the document and asked that this be amended to the Valleys Regional Equality Council.

Miss Bethan Davies (UCAC) advised that her title had been incorrectly noted within the

Membership section and asked that it be amended from Mrs to Miss Bethan Davies.

It was noted that the date listed against Emma Sullivan, as Clerk of SACRE was incorrect and should be amended to January 2011.

Subject to the amendments noted SACRE agreed the Annual Report for the Academic Year 2010-2011.

7. CAERPHILLY SACRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2010-2013

The report sought to inform members of SACRE on the issues relating to Caerphilly SACRE Development Plan. The plan detailed SACRE's role in promoting and supporting the raising of standards of pupil's attainment in religious education, the improvement in the provision of religious education, increasing 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.

The different elements of the plan were looked at in order to ensure that all current and future developments had been identified.

Aims 1-4 of the plan were fully considered and Members noted the inclusion of the use of the school self-evaluation tool as an additional means of monitoring RE in schools. Under Aim 3, Members noted that holding meetings within schools afforded SACRE an ideal opportunity to observe acts of collective worship and get a real flavour for the nature of collective worship in schools.

SACRE's support and representation during the launch of the National RE Festival and the ESIS event was noted, along with Caerphilly entries in the National RE Competition. Members acknowledged the regular updates received on local and national issues including today's presentation on the RESilience Project.

The school self-evaluation tool was discussed further and Mrs Boardman advised that her Head had been asked to complete the form and confirmed that there was no extra work involved, as the information had already been prepared in the department's self evaluation; it was simply a matter for forwarding on the relevant data. Mrs Thomas confirmed that the monitoring form was currently being discussed in area meetings.

Having fully considered the 2010-2013 Development Plan SACRE agreed the content and progress made.

8. INSETS NEEDS AND PLANS 2011-2012

The report informed SACRE of the in-service training offered for Caerphilly schools running from Summer 2011-Spring 2012.

Members noted the Primary, Cross Phase and Secondary training days and were advised that the RE for NQT's had been removed from the programme, as a more generic course rather than subject specific course would be made available to them. Mrs Thomas confirmed that a second day of training would be provided on RE in Foundation Phase and the Inspiring Collective Worship training would be provided by an outside body and should prove to be an exciting opportunity.

SACRE noted the in service programme for 2011-2012.

9. REVIEW OF SACRE REPORTS 2004-2008 (DFES)

The report provided SACRE with a summary of the Review of SACRE Report from 2004 - 2008. The review summarises the work of SACRE's in supporting schools as they endeavour to raise standards in religious education and collective worship. It is particularly useful where SACRE's wished to collaborate and identify effective approaches for continual improvement.

Members noted the Executive Summary and the recommendations contained therein. Members were please to note that DfES acknowledged the quality of work that is carried out by SACREs in supporting and raising standards in RE and appreciates the role they play in evaluating effective collective worship to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

SACRE considered the review document and the recommendation made by DfES and noted the report.

10. RE FESTIVAL - SPRING 2011

The report provided SACRE with feedback on the Central South Consortia event held at Ty Dysgu (ESIS) on March 10th 2011.

A CD ROM of the event was shown and Members noted the contributions from Cwrt Rawlin and St Gwladys Primary who performed dance routines and also enjoyed Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni 'peace songs' and the national song 'Place of Trust'.

SACRE noted the report.

11. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2012

The report informed Members of the themes for Holocaust Memorial Day 2012.

Mrs Thomas confirmed that the theme for 2012 is 'Speak Up, Speak Out'; the idea behind the theme is to give voice to the things in which we believe. Holocaust Memorial Day 2012 aims to show and give examples of ways in which we can speak up and take inspiration from the past and the historical figures, people from the present day, people who live in our communities and neighbourhoods speaking up.

SACRE considered the report and recommended that a letter be sent to schools reminding them of Holocaust Memorial Day and asking them to commemorate it in some way and reference be made to the website, ww.hmd.org.uk for appropriate resources.

12. RE QUEST - NEW RESOURCES

The report sought to raise Members awareness of a new resource for schools.

Quest has produced a number of free resources for schools on Christianity. A DVD entitled 'Reflections' explores the main topics covered in GCSE courses and includes interviews with 20 inspirational people who tell their stories related to themes. Attention was drawn to specific sections on ethics and interfaith dialogue.

Due to technical difficulties the DVD could not be accessed during the meeting and Members agreed to defer this to the next meeting.

WASACRE

13. THE WASACRE MEETING HELD ON THE 24TH JUNE 2011 AT ANGLESEY

The report informed SACRE of the discussion and deliberations on the WASACRE meeting held on the 24th June 2011 at Anglesey.

Members noted the range of activities organised for the Celebrating RE events held across Wales and the results of the WASACRE competition were acknowledged.

Feedback from the meeting with the Minister, Mr Leighton Andrews on the 23rd March 2011 was noted.

The deliberations of the Executive Committee were feedback for Members information and the approval of WASACRE's annual report and increases to annual subscriptions were noted.

New Officers to WASACRE were confirmed as Rev Canon Edward Evans (Chair), Tania ap Sion (Vice-Chair), Libby Jones (Vice-Secretary) and Brian Roger and Vicky Thomas were elected to the Executive Committee.

SACRE noted the report.

11. REPRESENTATION AT WASACRE ON 24TH NOVEMBER AT CARDIFF

The report sought nomination for a representative to attend the next WASACRE meeting on the 24th November 2011 at Cardiff.

SACRE members Janet Jones, Enfys Hawthorn, Darren Ralph, Councillor Anne Blackman and Councillor Michael Gray volunteered to attend. It was agreed that details of the meeting would be forwarded to Members.

12. CORRESPONDENCE

Religious Education News No. 89, Summer 2011 was circulated to Members during the meeting.

Mrs Thomas informed Members that an email had been received from the Humanist Society seeking Humanist representation on SACRE and confirmed that she would be seeking further guidance from WASACRE on the issues raised and would report back to Members in due course.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None noted.

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 Thursday, 8th December 2011, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN