



## **CAERPHILLY STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE (RHYMNEY ROOM)  
ON THURSDAY, 14TH NOVEMBER 2013 AT 2.00 P.M.**

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**PRESENT:**

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

**Councillors:**

Mrs M.E. Sargent

Representing Teaching Organisations: Mrs N. Boardman (NUT) and Mrs H. Marsh (ASCL)

Representing Religious Organisations: Mrs E. Hawthorn (United Reform Church), Mrs. J. Jones (Church in Wales), Mr. M. Western (Roman Catholic Archdiocese).

**Together with:**

V. Thomas (RE Consultant), J. Elias (Service Manager ALN) and E. Sullivan (Democratic Services Officer).

### **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D.G. Carter and W. David.

### **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 meeting held on the 10th June 2013 (minute nos. 1-10 on page nos. 4) be approved as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Standing Conference held on the 10th June 2013 (minute nos. 1-2 on page nos. 1-2) be approved as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

### **3. MATTERS ARISING**

Mrs. Thomas, RE Consultant to SACRE, referenced the minutes of the Standing Conference with regard to the consultation process for the Agreed Syllabus. She informed members that Phase 1 of the WG's curriculum review was now in schools for consultation and encouraged Teacher Representatives to review and comment on the document during this period.

The Chair requested further information on the future role of Mrs Thomas as SACRE's RE Consultant. Mrs Thomas advised that she would continue on in her present role unless notified otherwise by the EAS. Members were grateful for Mrs Thomas' continued support and thanked her for all her efforts on behalf of Caerphilly SACRE.

### **4. SACRE MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

The report updated Members on the present Membership of Caerphilly SACRE and the actions taken to fill its current vacancies were detailed.

The Clerk to SACRE advised that Branch Secretaries for NAHT and NASUWT had confirmed their intention to raise the vacant positions at their next Branch Board meetings, which should secure full representation by the next meeting.

Having fully considered its content SACRE noted the report.

### **5. SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13**

The report presented the draft SACRE Annual Report for 2012/13 for Members consideration and approval prior to its submission to DfES on the 30th December 2013.

The annual report outlined the activities of SACRE during the academic year 2012/13 and Members comments and amendments were welcomed. Mrs Thomas referred Members to the Executive Summary and highlighted specific issues and the actions taken by SACRE to ensure it met all its statutory obligations.

The distribution of the report was fully discussed and Members agreed that once again the report should be sent electronically however to ensure that RE Department Heads received copies, specific instructions should be given Head Teachers to cascade the document down to all appropriate personnel.

A Member noted that Cwmaber Infants School had been listed as a Primary School within the document and requested that this be amended prior to the reports publication.

It was proposed and seconded that subject to the above amendment the SACRE Annual Report for 2012/13 be approved and by a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

### **6. SACRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2012-2015**

The report detailed the Caerphilly SACRE Development Plan for the academic years 2012-2015. The actions required, outcomes and progress made was outlined for Members information and approval.

Members were referred to the action plan as detailed in the SACRE Annual Report and the progress that SACRE had made in relation to the different elements contained therein were examined. SACRE's monitoring of standards through the reviewing of inspections reports and school self-evaluation was summarised and the progress made was noted.

In relation to identifying INSET needs and offering advice on training, Members discussed the CPD needs of teachers and the future role that WASACRE could play in identifying and facilitating training. The success of the recent WASACRE conference and associated workshops was referenced and Members agreed that this would be an excellent way forward.

SACRE's monitoring of collective worship was summarised and the presentations and school visits made in the last academic year were noted within the action plan.

Having fully considered the content of the report, it was proposed and seconded that the Development Plan 2012/15 be approved and by a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

## **7. ESTYN THEMATIC REVIEW: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL**

The report informed SACRE of the outcome of the Estyn Thematic Review in Religious Education in Secondary Schools along with the factors that affect standards including planning, teaching, assessment and leadership, improving quality and external influences.

Members were advised that a sample of 20 schools, including one Caerphilly school were visited by Estyn during November and December 2012. The visits involved lesson observations, scrutiny of work and relevant documentation and interviews with senior managers, the subject lead and a focus group of learners. Additional schools were also asked to complete a brief questionnaire about provision for RE and data from recent inspections was also included in the review.

Mrs Thomas confirmed that the resulting report by Mr Mark Campion was very positive, noting the increase in popularity and attainment in the subject. Members were advised that more pupils gain a qualification in RE than in any other non-core subject in Wales. The number of pupils taking the full GCSE course had risen significantly over the last five years with the percentage of pupils attaining grades A\* to C well above the average for other subjects.

The lesson observations in the schools visited showed standards to be good in the majority of schools at KS3. However it was noted that more able pupils were not being sufficiently challenged by the tasks set and Members were advised that this would be matter for the individual schools to address. Almost all pupils observed showed respect for the opinions and beliefs of others and enjoyed discussing a variety of issues relating to religion and ethics and took an active and enthusiastic part in lessons.

Teaching was noted to be good or better in just over two-thirds of the lesson observed and excellent in nearly one-fifth of the lesson observed, which suggested that teaching in RE is better than average for teaching across all subjects in secondary schools inspected since 2010. In relation to the use of non-specialist teachers in RE, it was noted that they were rarely used and when used did not have a negative impact on standards in the majority of schools. Members were also pleased to note the high expectations set by subject leaders, through monitoring, support and challenge in order to encourage other teachers. Reference was made to the lack of professional development opportunities and it was agreed that this would represent a challenge going forward.

Members were referred to the reports recommendations and particular reference made to recommendation R8. Ms Thomas advised that professional development could be a key area for WASACRE going forward particularly given the success of the recent conference and workshop programme. However this would need to be considered alongside the work of the EAS and the possible development of training on a consortia basis.

Members noted the challenges with regard to self-evaluation and the accessibility of data was discussed at length. It was agreed that a more analytical rather than descriptive analysis was required in order to provide robust self-evaluation however the extent to which this was

possible was highly dependent upon the quality of leadership and data available at the individual school. The WJEC website was reference in terms of the amount of accessible data it provided, however it was noted that the site was not easily navigated but worth the effort.

Having full considered its content SACRE noted the report. It was agreed that copies of the document be sent to all Heads of RE in Caerphilly secondary schools by the clerk to SACRE.

## **8. WELSH GOVERNMENT FOUNDATION PHASE GUIDANCE**

The report informed SACRE of the Foundation Phase guidance issued by Welsh Government in relation to religious education for 3 to 7 years olds in Wales.

The guidance provided key messages for planning, learning and teaching and included case studies that illustrated good classroom practice, planning grids and suggestions regarding assessment. The document comprised two separate sections containing case studies and information in English and in Welsh, the studies included were detailed for Members information and the associated web links for access were confirmed.

Members were pleased to note the guidance issued and it was proposed and seconded that the information be circulated to nursery, infant and primary schools with an accompanying letter.

During the course of debate SACRE recognised that Foundation Phase/Infant/Primary Schools were under represented within the present membership and this was fully discussed. It was proposed and seconded that the Co-opted Member vacancy, previously occupied by VALREC, presented an ideal opportunity to provide this representation and by a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

Members requested that the Clerk to SACRE consult with the Manager for Learning, Education and Inclusion in order to secure the appropriate representation.

SACRE having fully considered its content noted the report and Guidance and requested that the Clerk to SACRE circulate the guidance to nursery, infant and primary schools.

## **9. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP ACTION PLANS**

The report presented SACRE with the action plans for St. Cenydd and Pontllanfraith Comprehensive schools in relation to collective worship.

Members fully discussed and noted the action plans received for both schools and discussed the issues in accommodating a daily act of collective worship. The extent to which a spiritual element should be incorporated into collective worship was debated, as Members felt this to be integral. Mrs Thomas advised that Estyn guidance made it clear that not all acts of collective worship need to have a religious or spiritual element but could for instance have a moral element. However, over a term and a year the religious and spiritual elements would need to be included in acts of collective worship. The importance of providing time to discuss and reflect upon the story or thought of the day being explored was also noted.

SACRE noted the actions plans for St Cenydd and Pontllanfraith Comprehensive schools and requested that any feedback from Estyn on the progress made be reported back after the inspectors revisit the schools.

**10. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2014**

The report informed SACRE of the resources available to schools in order to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day 2014.

Mrs Thomas confirmed that the theme for 2014 was 'Journeys' and confirmed that further information on the theme and free educational resources were available through the HMD website at <http://education.hmd.org.uk>

SACRE noted the theme and resources available to schools in order to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day 2014 and requested that the Clerk to SACRE write out to all schools to make them aware of the resources available and request that they commemorate the occasion in some way.

**11. WASACRE - FEEDBACK FROM THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AT CAERNARFON - 19TH JUNE 2013**

The report updated Members on the discussions and deliberation of WASACRE at its Annual General Meeting at Caernarfon on the 19th June 2013.

Reference was made to the RE Quality Mark award (REQM) and the presentation made by Phil Lord. The main messages were summarised and the criteria for the award outlined. Particular reference was made to the REQM website [www.reqm.org](http://www.reqm.org) and its usefulness for self-evaluation purposes.

SACRE noted the discussions and deliberations of WASACRE.

**12. APPOINTMENTS TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The report informed Members of the appointments and outstanding vacancies to the WASACRE Executive Committee.

Members were advised that following the Executive Elections on the 18th June 2013, Mr. Gavin Craigen had been appointed as Vice Chair and Mr Mark Brown and Mrs Mary Parry were appointed as an Executive Member.

The third place on the Committee had not been filled due to a tie in votes between the two candidates. SACRE's were requested to look again at these two profiles and inform the WASACRE Secretary of the agreed vote.

Having fully considered the profiles it was proposed and seconded that Councillor Michael Gray be nominated as Caerphilly SACRE's preferred candidate for the Executive Member vacancy and by a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

Members requested that the Clerk to SACRE inform the WASACRE Secretary of the outcome of the vote.

**13. FEEDBACK FROM THE WASACRE CONFERENCE 2013**

The report provided feedback from the WASACRE Conference 2013.

Members were referred to Appendix 1 of the report which outlined the conference programme and workshops provided on the day and full discussion ensued.

Members who attended the conference welcomed the training opportunities offered by the workshops, which were well facilitated but felt that more time should have been allotted in order to give an opportunity for more in-depth discussions around the individual workshop subjects.

Members agreed that they would welcome more development opportunities like this but would prefer them to concentrate on a single theme.

Have fully considered its content SACRE noted the report.

The meeting closed at 15.20 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 Wednesday, 5th March 2013, they were signed by the Chairman.

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CHAIRMAN