



CAERPHILLY STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT NEWBRIDGE SCHOOL, NEWBRIDGE, ON WEDNESDAY, 10TH JUNE 2015 AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor J. Taylor - Vice-Chair - Presiding

Representing Teaching Organisations: Miss H. Bartley (ATL), Mrs B. Davies (UCAC), Mrs L. Strange (NASUWT)

Representing Religious Organisations: Mrs J. Jones (Church in Wales), Mrs E. Hawthorn (United Reformed Church)

Together with:

Mrs V. Thomas (RE Consultant), Mrs T. Cunnick (Manager - Community, Youth Service and Adult), Miss R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

Also present:

Miss M. Jones (Newbridge School Pupil)

1. WELCOME

Mrs Vicky Thomas, RE Advisor to SACRE, opened the meeting and Members were welcomed to Newbridge School.

Mrs Tanis Cunnick was in attendance as the new local authority representative to Caerphilly SACRE, having replaced Mrs Keri Cole (who has now been designated as the Chief Education Officer for Caerphilly Council) in this capacity.

2. RETIREMENT OF CHAIR OF CAERPHILLY SACRE

Mrs Thomas advised Members that Councillor Michael Gray, Chair of Caerphilly SACRE, had recently announced his retirement from local government at the recent Annual Meeting of Council. Warm tributes were paid to the retiring Member and SACRE referenced his valuable contributions to both Caerphilly SACRE and the Wales Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (WASACRE). Members added that Councillor Gray would be greatly missed by SACRE and wished him a long and happy retirement.

It was agreed that the Clerk to SACRE would write to Councillor Gray to convey the thanks and best wishes of Caerphilly SACRE.

3. APPOINTMENT OF A CHAIR TO CAERPHILLY SACRE

In view of Councillor Gray's retirement, nominations were sought for the position of Chair to Caerphilly SACRE. A nomination for Councillor John Taylor (the current Vice-Chair) was moved and seconded, and it was unanimously agreed that he be appointed Chair of Caerphilly SACRE up to the next County Borough elections.

Councillor Taylor moved to his position as Chair for the remainder of the meeting. It was agreed that the Clerk to SACRE would write to all Caerphilly SACRE Members to seek expressions of interest for the vacant post of Vice-Chair and that the matter be placed as an item for consideration on the Autumn 2015 meeting agenda.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs E.M. Aldworth, D.G. Carter, W. David, Mrs G.D. Oliver and Mrs M.E. Sargent, together with Mrs N. Boardman (NUT), Ms R. Bradshaw and Mr E. Mushayanyama (Co-opted Members), Lieutenant C. DiPalma (The Salvation Army), Mr M. Western (Roman Catholic Archdiocese) and Rev E. Williams (Baptist Union of Wales).

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

6. MINUTES – 9TH MARCH 2014

Mrs Thomas referred to paragraph 6, Item 6 (Membership Update 2014-2015 and Humanist Request for Co-Option), which included a sentence that contained the wording "the situation regarding SACRE membership differed in Wales to that of English SACREs". Mrs Thomas asked for this portion of the sentence to be disregarded, in that it was an inaccurate reflection of the explanation of SACRE membership provided at that meeting. Subject to the above amendment, it was

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Caerphilly SACRE meeting held on 9th March 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

7. PRESENTATION – RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT NEWBRIDGE SCHOOL

Miss Helen Bartley, Head of Religious Education (RE) at Newbridge School, welcomed Members to the school, and introduced Mollie Jones (a Year 10 pupil), who would be assisting her with the presentation.

With the aid of a slideshow presentation, Miss Bartley delivered to SACRE Members an insight into the teaching and study of RE at the school, entitled "Why Study RE?". She outlined the RE staff at Newbridge School, together with reasons for the study of RE within the curriculum. Miss Bartley explained that it enables understanding about the world and the people who live in it, assists in listening to and respecting other people's views, provides self-assessment of beliefs and ideas, and aids the development of personal values and morals.

Miss Bartley outlined the structure of RE lessons within Newbridge School at Key Stages (KS) 3 and 4. RE is a compulsory curriculum subject and pupils receive 1 hour of RE study per week (or 1 hour per fortnight at KS4 if alternated with compulsory Welsh lessons). If RE is selected as a KS4 option then pupils have 5 hours of lessons per fortnight. Christianity and

Hinduism is studied in Year 7 and Judaism and Islam studied in Year 8. Miss Bartley outlined the ways in which KS3 assessment is carried out, together with the teaching and learning aids used in the study of RE (such as music, thinking maps, educational visits and peer activities).

The RE department also uses competitions to facilitate the study of RE and recent examples of these were outlined to Members, including "Design a poster showing the importance of Religious Education" and "Write a poem about the Holocaust". The winner of the latter competition was Samuel Baskerville in Year 8, who wrote a powerful and moving poem entitled "The End is Too Late" and subsequently had his work displayed at Blackwood Miners Institute.

Miss Bartley proceeded to outline the curriculum structure at Key Stage 4. In addition to the WJEC Compulsory Short Course at Years 9, 10 and 11, comprising of 1 hour per week, pupils who take RE as a KS4 option (Full Course) study Judaism in Years 9 and 10 and Christianity in Year 11 (5 hours per fortnight). She explained that this curriculum would be subject to change in September with the introduction of revised specifications for GCSE and GCE/A Level and discussed with the RE Advisor to SACRE how these changes could impact on the Full Course and Short Course and their respective time allocations.

Miss Bartley outlined examples of extra-curricular RE activities at KS4, including visits to local churches and synagogues, together with attending Holocaust Memorial Day in Cardiff. The school has also taken pupils on trips abroad to Berlin in Germany, and to the Auschwitz Concentration Camp and Krakow in Poland. Pupils have attended a performance of "Jesus Christ Superstar" at the New Theatre in Cardiff and recently received a visit from the Korean Dance Group.

Miss Mollie Jones from Year 10 was then invited to explain to SACRE why she had chosen to take Religious Education as a KS4 study option. Mollie explained that she found the subject matter interesting and enjoys learning about different religions and the world around her. She explained that she is actively encouraged by teachers in her RE studies and intends to take the subject as one of her A-Levels. She has enjoyed the various trips organised by the school, including a synagogue visit and meeting a rabbi, and explained that anti-Semitism studies have given her an understanding of the struggle faced by Jews and the perspectives of other people. She gave examples of the learning aids and support given to pupils in their exam preparation, which included sitting in the examination hall and completing past papers to help with confidence and familiarise pupils with the subject matter. In response to a question from the RE Advisor to SACRE, Mollie explained that she thoroughly enjoyed the discussion aspect of RE and found that it was useful to listen to other people's viewpoints within the course of debates.

SACRE Members congratulated Mollie on an enthusiastic and insightful presentation, and she left the meeting at that point.

Discussion of matters raised during the course of the presentation ensued and Miss Bartley explained that the RE department will thoroughly consider and assess the impact of the revised specifications for GCSE and GCE/A Level on delivering RE within the school. Miss Bartley also referenced the introduction of the revised Welsh Baccalaureate from September 2015, which assesses a variety of pupil skills (such as literacy and numeracy) and will be the key performance indicator for schools from September 2018. Detailed discussion arose as to how this could affect the structure of Religious Education lessons.

Members were referred to the minutes of the last WASACRE meeting on 6th March 2015, at which this matter was discussed in detail. Mrs Thomas outlined to Members the discussions arising from that meeting, which included concerns from RE Heads about KS4 RE time being used for Welsh Baccalaureate-dedicated lessons in their schools. At that meeting, Mrs Thomas' comments in regards to RE being a statutory requirement were reiterated by other WASACRE Members who called for the need for schools, especially RE departments, to be supported by their SACREs at this time. Further discussion took place as to how the new

curriculum would be taught alongside the Welsh Bacculaureate and Mrs Thomas suggested that it would be useful for RE teachers to liaise with their Welsh Bacculaureate co-ordinator for the county borough in respect of this matter.

SACRE agreed that they would monitor the situation and assess the impact of the revised Welsh Bacculaureate qualification on Religious Education at a future point in time.

The Chair thanked Miss Bartley and Mollie Jones for their presentations to SACRE.

8. SACRE MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Members were referred to the minutes of the previous meeting (9th March 2015) and the RE Advisor summarised the situation to date arising from the recent application for Humanist representation within SACRE. Members were advised that they would be further updated on this matter at the next meeting in Autumn 2015.

9. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2015-16

The tentative meeting dates proposed within the agenda were agreed by Members and offers were sought from SACRE Members for suitable host venues. Locations for two meetings were confirmed and details of these meetings will be sent to the relevant persons.

The Autumn Term meeting will be held on Monday 2nd November 2015 (2pm) at Penallta House Council Offices, Tredomen, Ystrad Mynach.

The Spring Term meeting will be held on Thursday 3rd March 2016 (2pm) at Lewis School, Pengam.

The Summer Term will be held on Tuesday 14th June 2016 (2pm). Details of the venue will be circulated to Members once confirmed.

10. FEEDBACK ON DONALDSON REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

The report detailed the background of a review of assessment arrangements and the National Curriculum in Wales, which is led by Professor Graham Donaldson and includes two phases. Professor Donaldson has now reported back to the Education Minister regarding Phase 2 of the review.

Mrs Thomas gave SACRE an overview of the main messages within the Donaldson Review applicable to Religious Education. The full Review is available on the Welsh Government website. The Review proposes that RE should form part of the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience and remain a statutory curriculum from reception class (Pages 46-47). Mrs Thomas outlined the ongoing consultation and response to the Donaldson Review and suggested that it would be useful to receive clarification on how these proposals relate to the requirement for spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development in schools.

Between the ages of 14-16, the Review (Page 61) recommends that young people should continue to study aspects of the curriculum which are important to achieving some of the characteristic of the four purposes of education that would not be achieved otherwise, including RE. The Review also proposes that a general duty be placed on schools to organise and deliver a curriculum for all children and young people that is designed to meet the four purposes of education (Page 100). In line with national policy, specific duties may also be placed on schools in relation to the Welsh language and RE.

Mrs Thomas tabled a copy of a Powerpoint presentation which had previously been discussed at the NAPfRE meeting on 5th March 2015 and WASACRE on 6th March 2016. The Powerpoint highlighted some of the main points of the Donaldson Review, including the four purposes of the curriculum, the six areas of learning and experience, cross-curriculum responsibilities (literacy, numeracy and digital competence), subsidiarity, and the next stage in the Review process.

The presentation slides contained questions for interested RE parties to consider as part of the 'Great Debate' consultation process and were centred around a number of areas, such as spirituality, pedagogical principles and teacher involvement in shaping the curriculum. Members' attention was directed to the support for educational progression and the cross-curriculum responsibilities detailed in the Review, in particular that of digital competence.

On 15th April 2015, the National Advisory Panel for Wales (NAPfRE) and Members of WASACRE met to discuss the implications for RE of the Donaldson Review and to formulate a response on behalf of the Panel and WASACRE. SACREs were also afforded the opportunity to respond, with a copy of the NAPfRE response being sent to all SACRE members for comment and a formal response to Welsh Government made from Caerphilly SACRE.

Following consideration of views arising from the first phase of the Great Debate, a formal statement by the Minister for Education, Huw Lewis, on the next stage of the review of the curriculum and assessment arrangements will be presented in Summer 2015.

Having discussed the key points raised in the report and presentation and the impact that this could have on RE (particularly at KS3), Members noted the contents of the report.

11. FEEDBACK ON WASACRE PRESENTATION "ENGAGING BOYS IN RE AND RAISING THEIR STANDARDS"

Members were reminded of the results of an Estyn inspection which identified an issue around the motivation of boys in the study of RE. Mrs Thomas explained that at the last WASACRE meeting, a presentation was delivered by Mary Parry (a local authority RE Advisor) which explored this matter further. During this presentation, Mrs Parry shared a scheme of work for KS3 pupils that she had developed, entitled "Muslim Footballers in the Premier League". The scheme contains a number of tasks which aims to engage and motivate boys, raise standards, implement the Literacy and Numeracy Framework, and develop religious education skills and thinking skills.

Copies of the scheme were tabled at the meeting and Mrs Thomas outlined the activities with the scheme and how they related to RE. The scheme outlined a number of Muslim footballers throughout the Premier League and contained activities which asked pupils to consider the ways in which Islam affect players' lives on and off the football pitch. This included the considerations of performing Salah on match days, rules about Islam and money and the dilemma for Muslim footballers in relation to Saum (fasting) and performance. The scheme also contained an exercise where two Muslim football supporters were away on a coach trip and pupils had to take into account a number of considerations in regards to their evening meal. By making Islamic study adaptable and relevant to a topic that they could identify with, it was hoped that this scheme of work would engage boys in RE and raise their standards.

SACRE were pleased to note the interesting and original ideas contained within the scheme of work, and teaching association Members were encouraged to take these ideas back to their classrooms.

12. CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk to SACRE advised Members that a copy of a leaflet from Religious Education Movement Wales (REMW), which outlined a number of useful teaching resources, had recently been circulated to all schools in the county borough. This information had also been emailed to Members.

13. FEEDBACK FROM THE WASACRE MEETING AT PORT TALBOT – 6TH MARCH 2015

Members were updated on the discussions and deliberation of WASACRE at its meeting in Port Talbot on 6th March 2015.

Reference was made to discussion of the revised Welsh Baccalaureate at the WASACRE meeting, together with changes to GCSE and A Level specifications in Wales. A number of NAPfRE presentations were received at that meeting including *The Literacy and Numeracy Framework of RE*, which outlined the work of University of Wales Trinity Saint David students in incorporating this framework in the teaching of religious education. The other two presentations, *Curriculum Review*, which addressed the Donaldson Review of the National Curriculum and *Engaging boys in RE and raising their standards* were discussed earlier in the SACRE meeting.

Mrs Thomas explained that she had also updated WASACRE Members on the work of Caerphilly SACRE in regards to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development comments in Estyn reports, including the letter that had been sent to the Chief Inspector at Estyn and the subsequent response received.

SACRE noted the discussions and deliberations of WASACRE at the Port Talbot Meeting

14. REPRESENTATION AT FORTHCOMING WASACRE MEETINGS

Members were advised of the dates and times of forthcoming WASACRE meetings and sought nominations for representation from Caerphilly SACRE.

With regards to the WASACRE meeting of **25th June 2015** (Mold, Flintshire), it was noted that Mrs Thomas would be in attendance. Councillor J. Taylor advised that he might be able to attend, subject to other commitments.

With regards to attendance at the WASACRE meeting of **25th November 2015** (Blaenau Gwent), it was agreed that this matter would be discussed at the next SACRE meeting on 2nd November 2015.

15. EXECUTIVE VOTING FOR THE PERIOD 2015-2016

The report to Members detailed nominations in respect of the WASACRE Executive Committee and Vice Chair to WASACRE ahead of the WASACRE meeting on 25th June 2015.

It was noted that there had originally been three nominations for two positions on the Executive Committee, but in that Councillor Michael Gray had withdrawn his nomination due to his retirement, the two remaining nominations would be automatically elected to the Executive Committee. The single nomination for the position of Vice Chair would also be automatically elected.

Members noted the nominations to the WASACRE Executive Committee and to the position of Vice Chair.

The Chair thanked the Members of Caerphilly SACRE for their attendance at the meeting and also Miss Helen Bartley for her kind hospitality and informative presentation.

The meeting closed at 3.33 pm

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd November 2015, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR