



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

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH, ON TUESDAY, 18TH OCTOBER 2016 AT 2.00 P.M.**

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PRESENT:

Councillor J. Taylor - Chair  
Mrs J. Jones (Church in Wales) - Vice-Chair

Councillors:

D.G. Carter, Mrs M.E. Sargent

Representing Teaching Organisations: Miss H. Bartley (ATL), Mrs N. Boardman (NUT), Mrs L. Strange (NASUWT)

Representing Religious Organisations: Mrs E. Hawthorn (United Reformed Church), Mr M. Western (Roman Catholic Archdiocese)

Together with:

Mrs V. Thomas (RE Consultant), Mrs J. Elias (Service Manager – Additional Learning Needs), Miss R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs E.M Aldworth, Mrs G.D. Oliver and J. Simmonds, together with Mrs B. Davies (UCAC), Miss H. Marsh (ASCL), Mr C. Parry (NAHT), Captain C. Di-Palma (Salvation Army), Rev E. Williams (Baptist Union of Wales) and Ms R. Bradshaw (Co-opted Member).

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Mrs N. Boardman (NUT) declared an interest in Agenda Item 7 (Caerphilly School Inspection Reports Analysis - Autumn 2015-Summer 2016), and Miss H. Bartley (ATL) declared an interest in Agenda Item 9 (Revised GCSE Specifications for Religious Education Update). Details are minuted with the respective items.

### **3. MINUTES – 14TH JUNE 2016**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Caerphilly SACRE meeting held on 14th June 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **4. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2016-17**

SACRE noted the dates of the next two meetings:-

The Spring Term meeting will be held on Thursday 16th March 2017 – venue and time to be confirmed. Trinity Fields School or alternatively another primary school in the county borough were suggested as potential venues and it was agreed that the Clerk to SACRE would inform Members once arrangements are secured.

The Summer Term will be held on Monday 19th June 2016 (2pm) at Blackwood Comprehensive School.

#### **5. MEMBERSHIP UPDATE 2016-2017**

Mrs Vicky Thomas (RE Consultant to SACRE) referred Members to the current list of SACRE membership as contained within the agenda papers.

It was noted that Mr Eddy Mushayanyama (Race Equalities Wales) had recently resigned from Caerphilly SACRE owing to work commitments. Members placed on record their thanks to Mr Mushayanyama for his valued contribution to SACRE and wished him well for the future.

Mrs Thomas explained that this co-opted position had originally been allocated to VALREC (which had since disbanded and had been superseded by Race Equalities Wales). It was agreed that the Clerk to SACRE would seek a replacement co-opted member from Race Equalities Wales or an equivalent equalities organisation.

SACRE noted the contents of the report.

#### **6. CAERPHILLY SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16 AND PROGRESS REPORT OF SACRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2015-2018**

Mrs Thomas presented the draft Caerphilly SACRE Annual Report for 2015-2016 for Members' consideration and approval prior to its submission to the Welsh Government's Department for Education and Skills (DfES) by 31st December 2016.

The Annual Report outlined the activities of SACRE during the academic year 2015-2016 and Members' comments were welcomed on its contents. The RE Consultant referred Members to the executive summary of advice given by SACRE, and highlighted specific issues and the actions taken by SACRE to ensure it met all its statutory requirements.

Members were asked to check the Annual Report for accuracy and amendments were noted in respect of the list of presentations given to SACRE throughout the academic year. It was agreed that the final version of the Annual Report be submitted to DfES and circulated electronically to WASACRE (who will include the Annual Report on their website), together with schools and other relevant parties.

Subject to the above amendments, it was unanimously agreed that the SACRE Annual Report for 2015-2016 be approved.

Members were also referred to the Caerphilly SACRE Development Plan for the academic years 2015-2018, which has identified the key issues that need to be addressed in respect of RE provision across all schools in the county borough. A copy of the current Development Plan was included within the SACRE Annual Report, which summarised the actions identified, outcomes required and progress made in respect of RE provision during the academic year 2015-2016.

Having fully considered the report, Members noted the content and progress of the SACRE Development Plan 2015-2018 to date.

## **7. CAERPHILLY SCHOOL INSPECTIONS REPORT ANALYSIS AUTUMN 2015-SUMMER 2016**

Mrs Nicola Boardman (NUT) declared an interest in this item as her school was referenced in the report. In that there was no decision being taken on this item, the interest was deemed to be personal and not prejudicial, and she remained in the meeting room during consideration of the item.

Councillor John Taylor (Chair) gave his apologies to SACRE and left at this point in the meeting owing to a prior engagement. Mrs Janet Jones presided as Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

The report outlined the main RE findings derived from the Estyn inspection of fourteen Caerphilly schools between Autumn 2015 and Summer 2016. The analysis focused on comments in relation to spiritual development and collective worship. The context of the report was explained to SACRE and that the focus of SACRE's remit was on RE and collective worship findings and not the general inspection results of the school, which could significantly vary in other areas.

Mrs Thomas provided a detailed summary of the findings for each of the inspected schools, including details relating to spiritual development, the quality of collective worship and whether the school met statutory legal requirements in relation to collective worship. Other comments and issues were also outlined in the findings.

The report explained that the Estyn Common Inspection Framework notes that inspectors should only report on instances where the school does not comply with statutory requirements relating to collective worship. It was therefore assumed that as Estyn had not noted any instances of non-compliance, all schools inspected met statutory requirements in relation to collective worship. Additionally, SACRE were pleased to note that eight of the Estyn inspections commented on the quality of collective worship in schools

A number of positive outcomes were derived from the analysis and detailed to SACRE Members, including the finding that pupils usually have appropriate opportunities to reflect and develop their spiritual awareness. Pupils learn about global citizenship in weekly assemblies, and visits by clergy members to the school and by pupils to the church for services (such as harvest festival) are helpful in providing worthwhile opportunities to enhance pupils' spiritual development and moral well-being. Assemblies promote pupils' moral awareness well with clear messages, such as the importance of treating everyone equally. One report observed that collective worship develops pupils' understanding of other beliefs.

It was noted that following inspection of St James Primary, Estyn made a number of recommendations, including that the school should develop curriculum planning to ensure systematic coverage of all subjects in Key Stage 2. Discussion took place on this matter, with SACRE keen to ascertain as to whether this recommendation includes the subject of Religious Education, and what action is being taken on the matter if this is the case. Mrs Jacquelyn Elias (Service Manager – Additional Learning Needs) suggested that it may be beneficial to explore this matter with the school once the newly appointed headteacher has taken up her post in the Spring Term.

It was agreed that a letter would be sent to St James Primary School in the meantime to establish whether this recommendation encompasses the teaching of RE. It was also noted that SACRE had recently responded to the school regarding a query on the statutory requirements for RE and the recommended subject time allocation for pupils at primary level.

Discussion took place regarding the Estyn inspection findings for the two secondary schools inspected. During the inspection of Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni, Estyn commented on some “interesting assemblies” in relation to the quality of collective worship. Members suggested that it could be useful for inspectors to provide more detail in such cases in order for ideas to be shared as an example of good practice. Mrs Thomas explained that guidance is currently being produced by her RE associates which will encompass the provision of collective worship in schools.

SACRE were pleased to note the positive findings relating to the teaching of RE at Blackwood Comprehensive School, including promotion of SMSC, the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum, learning about sustainable development and global citizenship, and pupil awareness of diversity and respect for minority groups. Mrs Nicola Boardman (RE Co-ordinator at the school) also summarised details of the in-depth inspection process that had been carried out at the school and across the RE department.

Members noted the analysis of the Estyn inspection reports in relation to Religious Education and the actions arising from these.

## **8. RE AND THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM: UPDATE**

The report outlined the latest developments regarding the review of assessment arrangements and the National Curriculum in Wales, which was announced by the Minister for Education and Wales on 1st October 2012.

In February 2015, Professor Donaldson released his report and recommendations via the document “Successful Futures – Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales”. In October 2015, “A curriculum for Wales – a curriculum for life” was released, which outlines the plan for taking forward these recommendations.

Pioneer schools and stakeholders will have a say in the shape of the curriculum via a series of meetings. Curriculum Pioneers will define an Area of Learning and Experience framework, and New Deal Pioneers will focus on the pedagogy and leadership needed to deliver the requirements of the new curriculum as it develops.

Welsh Government held a meeting with WASACRE Officers on 13th September 2016, where it was established that there are 3 strands involved in the shaping of this curriculum (attending induction events, high level areas of learning and experience (AOLE) design and subject specific design). WASACRE have been asked to support WG by advising on reading material, attending meetings across the country on this matter, and identifying schools that exemplify good practice in RE. The timeline and other documents in respect of the curriculum reform are available on the Welsh Government website.

SACRE noted that a Policy Forum for Wales Keynote Seminar, entitled “The New National Curriculum for Wales – developing the Content of the Areas of Learning and Experience” took place in Cardiff on 13th October 2016. Mrs Thomas explained that she would make enquiries as to the outcomes arising from this seminar. Additionally, the National Advisory Panel for RE (NAPfRE) have begun the process of drawing up guidance document called “What makes good RE” for the Pioneer Network to consider when working on the shape of the RE curriculum. This is still ongoing and will provide guidelines on RE in schools.

During the course of the ensuing debate, Mrs Thomas explained that there are indications that the shape of the new curriculum in respect of RE will become more apparent in the New Year. Once further information is received in this regard, and subject to the advice from Welsh Government and WASACRE, then SACRE will be in a position to consider whether to initiate a review of the Caerphilly Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. This document was last updated in 2008, and in 2013 a Standing Conference of Caerphilly SACRE endorsed the re-adoption of the Agreed Syllabus with an understanding that it be reviewed once further

information is received in relation to the assessment and National Curriculum review. SACRE also discussed the composition of the Pioneer Network and expressed a need for it to be widened to call in specialist expertise in specific areas as and when required.

Following consideration of the report, SACRE noted the latest developments relating to the position of RE in the curriculum.

## **9. REVISED GCSE SPECIFICATIONS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: UPDATE**

Miss Helen Bartley (ATL) declared an interest in this item as she has written part of the new specification referenced in the report. In that there was no decision being taken on this item, the interest was deemed to be personal and not prejudicial, and she remained in the meeting room during consideration of the item.

The report summarised the latest situation regarding proposed changes to specifications and assessment practices for Religious Studies (RS) at GCSE and GCE (AS and A) Level. SACRE agreed that any information should be shared with schools as soon as possible after receiving any updates from WJEC to help RE departments in their planning and preparation of schemes of work and for teaching the revised specifications.

The A/AS level specifications have been approved and are in place for first teaching from September 2016. The GCSE specifications were delayed and therefore deferred by Qualifications Wales until first teaching in 2017. However, there has been an issue for those schools that start the GCSE courses early (such as Year 9) because they will need to start teaching from the new specifications in September 2016, and therefore they have been anxiously awaiting an outline of the new GCSE specification.

In September 2016 a number of updates were received from Lynda Maddock at WJEC regarding the revised GCSE specification. SACRE subsequently wrote to all secondary schools and SACRE members to inform them of the latest situation regarding the specifications. A copy of this information was appended to the report. The first update outlined details of the draft specification and provided advice on resources available via the Edequas website. The second update provided a link to sample chapters from the textbook that has been written for the Edequas specification, which has a significant deal of overlap with the draft Welsh specification, particularly in relation to the Philosophical/Ethical themes sections.

Mrs Thomas advised Members that the revised GCSE specification was officially approved on 12th October 2016 and has now been placed on the WJEC website.

Caerphilly SACRE were pleased to learn of the latest progress made in respect of the revised GCSE specification and noted the contents of the report.

## **10. INCLUSIVE SACRES AWARD**

Consideration was given to the report, which outlined details of the Accord Coalition's Inclusivity Award 2017. This year, award nominations have been ring-fenced to SACREs and the award is seeking to reward those SACREs that work hardest in their area towards boosting the growth of inclusion, cohesion and mutual understanding between those of different religions and beliefs. Further information regarding the award and a nomination form were appended to the report.

Mrs Thomas explained that this is a very positive award which recognises the hard work of SACREs and that she wanted to bring it to the attention of Members. However, there would be limited opportunity to evidence Caerphilly SACRE's role in the growth of inclusion, cohesion and mutual understanding between different religions and beliefs across the county

borough, especially given that Caerphilly SACRE has experienced difficulty in finding representatives from non-Christian faith groups. Mrs Thomas was therefore of the view that it would not be conducive for Caerphilly SACRE to apply for this award.

Members thanked Mrs Thomas for bringing the award to their attention and noted the contents of the report.

## **11. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2017**

The report informed Members of the resources available to schools in order to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day 2017.

The RE Consultant advised that the theme for 2017 is “How can life go on?” which refers to the continuing aftermath of the Holocaust and of subsequent genocides. Further information on the theme and free educational resources are available through the Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) website at [www.hmd.org.uk/content/for-educators](http://www.hmd.org.uk/content/for-educators).

Reference was made to commemorative events that took place across the county borough during Holocaust Memorial Day 2016 to remember the victims of the Holocaust and other atrocities. It was agreed that the Clerk to SACRE would forward the details of this year’s events to SACRE Members once they are finalised.

Members noted the theme and resources available to schools in order to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day 2017 and it was agreed that the Clerk to SACRE would write to all schools to make them aware of these resources and encourage them to commemorate the event.

## **12. CORRESPONDENCE**

The Clerk to SACRE summarised a number of updates that had been circulated to all secondary schools in the county borough regarding the revised criteria for GCSE specifications.

Secondary schools received a congratulatory letter from SACRE in respect of their examination results in Religious Education for Summer 2015. A letter was also sent to all secondary schools outlining the results of the WASACRE survey in respect of the Welsh Baccalaureate.

All primary schools were provided with advice on the correct use of the Incerts Assessment Programme software, together with information on RE teaching resources (an Autumn/Harvest Topic Pack from Books at Press). SACRE also provided advice to a primary school in response to a query that had been received regarding the study of Paganism.

SACRE were pleased to note the volume of correspondence sent on their behalf and were of the view that schools are being kept fully updated on all developments relating to Religious Education.

## **13. WASACRE - FEEDBACK FROM THE WASACRE MEETING IN RHYL, DENBIGSHIRE ON 23RD JUNE 2016**

Members were updated on the discussions and deliberation of WASACRE at its meeting in Rhyl on 23rd June 2016. A copy of the draft minutes was included in the meeting papers.

At the WASACRE meeting, discussion took place regarding the results of the Welsh Baccalaureate Survey recently sent to all schools across Wales. Concerns were raised that a

number of respondents (including two Caerphilly schools) had stated that since the implementation of the new Welsh Baccalaureate, their school did not provide statutory Religious Education according to the Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE at Key Stage 4.

WASACRE agreed that a presentation made at the meeting in respect of survey responses be forwarded to SACREs for circulation to their schools. It was also agreed that information be sent to SACREs regarding the schools who may not be meeting current statutory requirements for RE and that feedback be requested on local authorities' actions and progress on this matter.

Additionally, WASACRE sought advice from Welsh Government who outlined the action that should be taken in this respect. In the first instance SACREs are advised to formally inform/advise the Local Authority. If the situation remains the same and the school or schools involved continue to not meet the statutory requirement for RE, SACREs are advised to inform the Wales Association of SACREs. WASACRE is advised to write to the Local Authority involved to advise/remind them of their duty and to pass this information on to Welsh Government. An email from the Clerk to WASACRE was tabled at the SACRE meeting which summarised this advice.

Discussion took place on this matter and it was agreed that the Clerk to SACRE would write to all secondary schools in Caerphilly in relation to the statutory requirement at Key Stage 4. The letter will seek acknowledgement of its contents from the Headteacher or Head of RE at each school to ensure that this information has been received and understood by the appropriate persons. Additionally, Mrs Thomas confirmed that she would contact the two schools who had indicated they are not meeting the statutory requirement to confirm that they have understood and answered the survey question correctly, and if so, to address the course of action to be undertaken in this respect. Discussion also took place on the Short Course and the planning that needs to be undertaken by RE teaching staff in order to ensure it fulfils the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus.

SACRE noted the discussions and deliberations of WASACRE at the Rhyl meeting.

#### **14. REPRESENTATION AT FORTHCOMING WASACRE MEETINGS**

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

Councillor Mrs E. Hawthorn, Mrs J. Jones, and Mrs V. Thomas expressed an interest in attending the WASACRE meetings on **18th November 2016** (Carmarthenshire) and **3rd March 2017 (Usk)**. Councillor J. Taylor had also indicated earlier in the meeting that he might be able to attend these meetings. Mrs J. Elias volunteered as a reserve attendee for these meetings, They will be contacted with the agenda papers nearer to the meeting date and asked to confirm attendance. The Clerk to SACRE will inform WASACRE of the attendees.

Discussion took place regarding attendance at WASACRE meetings and ways of encouraging attendance. The RE Advisor outlined the importance of adequate representation from all SACREs and urged Members to attend WASACRE meetings whenever it is geographically feasible for them to do so.

The presiding Chair thanked the Members of Caerphilly SACRE for their attendance at the meeting.

The meeting closed at 3.58 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 16th March 2017, they were signed by the Chair.

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CHAIR