

# MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL



## SACRE MEETING

**3.45PM TUESDAY, 21ST FEBRUARY, 2012**

### **CONFERENCE ROOM 2**

This Agenda has been prepared by the Democratic Services Department. Any member of the public requiring information should contact the department on (01685) 725203 or email [democratic@merthyr.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@merthyr.gov.uk).

### **A G E N D A**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the last Meeting
3. Matters Arising
4. RE and the Merthyr Learning Quarter - Jonathan Martin, Merthyr Tydfil College
5. Religious Studies Examination Results 2011 (to be tabled at the meeting)
6. KS3 Assessment Issues:
  - 6.a Teacher Assessment levels in Religious Education 2011 (to be tabled at the meeting)
  - 6.b Securing Teacher Assessment at KS3 - Chief **(Pages 1 - 4)** Moderator's Report.

7. WASACRE
- 7.a Feedback from meeting on 24th November 2011 **(Pages 5 - 8)**  
at Cardiff
- 7.b Representation at the spring term meeting -  
Aberaeron Friday, 30th March 2012
8. SACRE Membership
9. Correspondence
10. Any other business as deemed urgent by the  
Chairman

<p><b><u>COMPOSITION:</u></b> Councillors Richard Thomas (Chair) Julie Symes (Vice-Chair) R Griffin, G Jones, Heledd Barnett, Janine Brill, Sue Blackmore, Debra Evans, Father Matthew Gibbon, Lynne Lambe, Parry, Carys Pritchard and Ann Star together with appropriate officers</p>
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[democratic@merthyr.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@merthyr.gov.uk) neu ffoniwch 01685 725203

## RE: Chief Moderator Report 2011

### Main messages for school departments that will be submitting their sample evidence in the school year 2011/12.

#### Range of evidence:

In this first full phase of the KS 3 Moderation for RE there was evidence that some of the messages given at the information meetings had been taken up by some schools. Evidence received by moderators demonstrated that a number of schools followed the WJEC guidance document, in the sense that attempts had been made to provide evidence of the three core inter-related skills (of Engaging with fundamental questions, Exploring religious beliefs, teachings and practices, and Expressing personal responses) and of the elements of the characteristics of the level descriptions.

However there were some samples that:

- included tasks that were unlikely to show understanding of the characteristics of the level descriptions because the nature of the tasks simply did not equate with the skills of the *National exemplar framework for religious education for 3 to 19 year olds in Wales* from which the level descriptions come;
- suggested the school had not followed the WJEC guidance document and offered examples of just one task/assignment through all of the levels, and with the minimum number of examples for each level. It is unlikely that the same task would cover all the elements of the characteristics of the level descriptions for all four levels;
- had the same two tasks/assignments repeated through all of the levels (again with the minimum number of samples for each level) – it is unlikely that such a limited range of tasks across all four levels could demonstrate all of the elements of the characteristics of the level descriptions for all four levels;
- contained very small amounts of material, sometimes two or three tasks with a total of just four or five sides of paper for just one level; such a small sample does not evidence clearly the characteristics of the three core inter-related skills and elements of the level descriptions;
- included assessment tests for their evidence. These tests by their very limited nature often do not demonstrate sufficient characteristics of a level description. The schools which submitted a greater number of samples with at least four or more tasks were much more successful in demonstrating their understanding of the characteristics of the level descriptions.

#### Presentation of sample evidence including teachers' commentary:

There was evidence in this phase of some schools having followed the WJEC Guidance and advice given to schools in the information meetings. The use of the WJEC commentary form, completed fully in terms of background information to the task and the kind of resources used, aided moderation. There was also much improvement in the identifying of where the evidence for the characteristics of the level descriptions could be found in the sample – many using a numbered grid system, or some sort of colour coding, and many helpfully included master copies of such grids.

However there were samples that:

- did not identify the precise location of the characteristics in the sample, but only noted on the cover sheet that the material did contain the evidence;
- contained examples of learners' work that had been evaluated and annotated independently by different teachers using different criteria. The expectation in the

WJEC Guidance Document is that the sample demonstrates the department's *collective* understanding of the characteristics of the level descriptions.

#### Understanding of the characteristics of the level descriptions:

The three core skills of the *National exemplar framework for religious education for 3 to 19 year olds in Wales* are clearly stated as being inter-related. This means that learners would be 'Engaging with fundamental questions' that relate to their 'Exploring of religious beliefs, teachings and practices' and which together impact on their 'Expressing personal responses', and also in other directions too.

For example, in considering religious beliefs, teachings and practices about something, learners should be given opportunities to consider their own and others personal responses to those beliefs, teachings and practices, and how these all inform, challenge and generally relate to fundamental questions that arise from their studies and from life experiences. Understanding this is critical to ensuring that learners are provided with opportunities to consider this cyclical inter-relationship.

- Some samples contained learners' responses to fundamental questions that were totally discrete and unrelated to the evidence for religious beliefs, teachings and practices in the sample for that level. These in turn also had no links or association with the evidence of learners' personal responses – thus making the three inter-related core skills totally independent of each other and free standing, sometimes not even related to religion at all.

It was also clear from the external moderation that there is a need for schools to look carefully at the progression from one level to another for each of the strands within the level. This is vitally important in ensuring that the evidence in the sample adequately demonstrates understanding of the strand within each of the levels. For example, the level description for Level 4 includes the statement: "*describe and begin to explain some of the basic religious beliefs, teachings and practices investigated*" and the same strand for Level 5 states: "*make links between the religious beliefs, teachings and practices studied.*" Level 6 requires learners to: "*use their understanding of the links between religious beliefs, teachings and practices investigated to consolidate their understanding of religion.*" The same pattern is also true of other strands within the level descriptions.

- Some samples, including the teacher commentaries, showed progression from one level to another in terms of greater detail or the use of more complex language. In other words they saw Level 4 as 'basic description', Level 5 as 'more detailed description' - perhaps with some explanation, and Level 6 as more complex and detailed descriptions. Such progression does not accord with the level descriptions and would indicate a lack of understanding of the characteristics as they are described in the *National exemplar framework for religious education for 3 – 19-year-olds in Wales*.

Also, a large number of samples did not seem to distinguish between religious **beliefs** (the things held to be true), religious **teachings** (the authoritative basis of beliefs as stated in sacred writings or by religious leaders) and religious **practices** (the out-workings or practical expressions of beliefs/teachings in ritual, worship, lifestyle, response to life and fundamental questions, etc). Each of the three informs and affects the others in an inter-related and dynamic way.

- Some samples did not actually include any teachings at all, though the teacher commentaries implied that they did; there were examples of beliefs and practices, but not teachings. It is vitally important that schools recognise the phrase "religious

beliefs, teachings and practices” is not a generic term meaning ‘anything to do with religion’.

A similar issue stems from the third core skill, where the progression within the level descriptions requires more than just a simple statement of personal opinion. For example, for Level 4 the wording of the level description states: “explain in simple terms how their own feelings, actions and opinions differ from those of others” whereas Level 5 has additional expectations, and is worded as: “explain how their own feelings, actions and opinions affect their own lives” and “describe how those of others similarly affect their lives”. This is taken yet further in Level 6, where the strand has two aspects: “consider the implications of their own beliefs and actions” and “compare these to other people and draw balanced conclusions.”

- Some samples identified learners’ conclusions as evidence of this later aspect of Level 6, but the statements made by learners were not balanced, did not arise out of the investigations into fundamental questions and/or the religious beliefs, teachings and practices investigated, and sometimes were rehearsing uninformed prejudice and stereotyping; these cannot be indications of appropriate understanding of the level descriptions. Also,
- some samples contained expressions of personal viewpoints that were just the learners’ own opinions – there was no reference or description or evaluation of others viewpoints or of differing viewpoints – the level descriptions require more than just a personal expression of own opinions.

As stated after the pilot moderation, these are critical distinctions, and schools are advised to consider carefully these distinctions, and to select appropriate material that demonstrates their understanding of them.

It was also evident this year – as referred to in the section on presentation of sample evidence above – that in a number of schools samples of pupil work for a level were submitted by different teachers but annotated and evaluated independently. Such an approach does not demonstrate the department’s collegiate understanding of the characteristics of the level descriptions.

There was also evidence in some samples of teachers marking (or accepting) clearly inaccurate information as correct. This does not indicate a clear understanding of standards as exemplified in the level descriptions. Internal cross-moderation of the sample would help avoid such issues.

#### Key messages for schools:

- Study carefully the WJEC Guidance Document about the sample material, and ensure sample evidence includes a teacher commentary that provides the appropriate background information and the precise location of evidence within the sample;
- Look at and discuss as a department the Welsh Government’s *Religious education: Guidance for Key Stages 2 and 3 Key messages for planning learning and teaching* and the accompanying *Exemplifying learner profiles at Key Stages 2 and 3 in religious education: Additional guidance*;
- Select a sufficient variety of tasks that enable all the characteristics of the level description and the breadth of the three inter-related core skills to be clearly evident;
- Ensure that there is sufficient evidence of religious beliefs, religious teachings and religious practices, the inter-relationship between them, and the specific aspects of the level description concerned;

- Give clear evidence within the sample that the department **collectively** understands the progression from one level to another for each of the strands.

Possible implications for teaching and learning, assessment and departmental standardisation:

- Ensure that the tasks and activities learners engage in during their course of study enable them to develop the skills as outlined in the *National Framework for religious education for 3 to 19 year olds in Wales*;
- Enable learners to understand the distinctions between religious beliefs, religious teachings and religious practices, and the way these inform and affect each other, and together relate to fundamental questions experienced in life and religion, and to personal expressions of themselves and others;
- As part of departmental preparations and considerations for standardisation, consider the Welsh Government's guidance documents for RE (referred to above) and discuss the detailed wording of the level descriptions to reach a common understanding of what they mean, and discuss the issues in the 'key messages for schools' and 'implications for teaching and learning' stated above.

**July 2011**

## MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**DATE:** FEBRUARY 21<sup>ST</sup> 2012

**SUBJECT:** THE WASACRE MEETING HELD ON NOVEMBER 24TH, 2011 IN CARDIFF

**PURPOSE:** TO INFORM THE SACRE OF THE DISCUSSIONS AND DELIBERATIONS OF WASACRE

### Summary

The issues were as follows:

#### **1. Introduction and Welcome**

Members were welcomed to Cardiff by pupils of Mount Stuart Primary who performed the Divali story through dance and by the Indo Cymru choir of Kitchener Primary. The Lord Mayor of Cardiff, Cllr Delme Bowen also welcomed members to the meeting.

#### **2. Report from the Executive Committee held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

Members were informed that the KS3 moderation timescale has been cut, with all schools now needing to make their submissions by March 2012. This is due to the cut in funding by the WG. A letter has been sent from the WASACRE executive to Leighton Andrews asking for an extension for RE because of its late inclusion in the process. It was reported that, to date, no reply had been received. A strong case was made in support of 'teacher voice' and the concerns raised by teachers in a number of LAs about the March 2012 deadline. Members were asked to vote about the way forward and it was agreed to write again to the Minister asking for an extension and raising the concerns of teachers.

#### **3. Respect and Resilience**

A presentation was received from Steve Bowden, a professional adviser to DfES, on the 'Respect and Resilience' document published by the WG in January 2011. The document provides guidance and advice to schools on how they can further develop aspects relating to community cohesion and prevent violent extremism. It was emphasised that the guidance is consistent with the principles of the School Effectiveness Framework and the Estyn Common Inspection Framework. Reference was made to the Welsh context in particular and the impact of extremist groups on young people as background to why schools and LAs need to engage with community cohesion.

The guidance provides advice to schools in relation to leadership, working with others, curriculum and teaching and intervention and support. Particular reference was made to the importance of ESDGC, PSE and RE in the development of community cohesion in the curriculum.

Copies of the document can be found on the WG website:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/respectresilience/?lang=en>

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/respectresilience/1&lang=cy>

Similar guidance has also been produced for further education institutions in Wales.

Creating Safe Learning Communities:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/safelearning/?lang=en>

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/safelearning/?1&lang=cy>

Guidance for Universities in Wales will be available online soon.

#### **4. The REsilience Project: a secondary school's perspective**

A presentation was received from Donna Graves, the Head of RE at Bryntirion Comprehensive, describing her involvement in, and perspective of, the REsilience project. She outlined how the completion of the self-evaluation questionnaire, discussion with a REsilience mentor and the use of Gateway documents all supported the work of the department in addressing the priority of *'Finding strategies to address incidents of prejudice and discrimination within the school, specifically through the provision of RE.'*

Donna outlined how the school developed the P4C strategy to support the priority as well as the resources from 'Show Racism the Red Card' following an Inset that she attended. Examples of resources and strategies used by the department were shared. Donna explained how worthwhile and beneficial she had found her involvement with the programme especially in developing her confidence in handling contentious issues as well as helping teachers to foster debate and dialogue effectively in the classroom.

#### **5. Community Cohesion: a primary school's perspective**

A presentation was received from Jared Nolan, acting head of Usk Church in Wales Primary school about a school linking network that was developed to support community cohesion and to develop links between the pupils of Maesglas Primary (Jared's former school) and Maindee Primary. This project was supported by the Gwent Ethnic Minority Support Service (GEMS) through the work of its advisory teacher Rebecca Webb and also support from Gwent police and the Schools Linking Network in England (funded by the DCSF). It was explained that the two schools, even though they were only 3-4 miles apart are very different in terms of catchment area. Maesglas Primary serves a local area where there is a high degree of social disadvantage with around 50% of pupils entitled to free school meals. Maindee Primary has around 80% of pupils who speak English as an additional language. In order to develop pupils' understanding of identity, diversity and community a number of events were arranged for year 5/6 pupils over an eight week period. It included team building games, visits to both schools, work on identity projects and a walk to the top of Twmbwrlwm. Throughout the eight weeks pupils could use a 'worry wall' and a 'big brother diary chair' to record their feelings. The 'Blob tree' was also used as a self-reflection tool.

It was explained that the two schools found it to be a worthwhile project to promote community cohesion and that similar projects have since been developed between other schools in Newport, Torfaen and Cardiff.

## **6. Representation on SACREs**

It was noted that all SACREs in Wales have received a letter from the British Humanist Association requesting full membership, or at least a co-opted status, to a Humanist representative.

Reference was made to 10/94 which states that

“The inclusion of representatives of belief systems such as humanism, which do not amount to a religion or religious denomination, would be contrary to the legal provisions referred to at paragraph 103”

It was explained that the Welsh Office Education Department Circulars were guidance only and do not have legal authority, unless there has been a court ruling on a particular aspect.

Reference was also made to the NASACRE viewpoint that encouraged SACREs in England to remain within the legal framework, which remains as before with no legal requirement for Humanists to have a place on Committee A and still only have a co-opted place. Although it was noted that some SACREs in England have given Humanists a Group A place.

The WASACRE Executive has already written a letter to the Welsh Government asking for clarification on this issue regarding the place of Humanists on a SACRE. The Association is awaiting a response with regard to the legal situation.

Several points were raised by members:

- a few SACREs in Wales already have Humanist representatives as co-opted members
- SACRE could co-opt a Humanist representative if this is in accordance with their constitution
- if reference is made to Humanism in the Agreed Syllabus then Humanists should have the right to attend SACREs
- SACREs should reflect the religious make up of their local area - one SACRE has requested figures relating to the number of Humanists in their LA
- There was reference made to the Office of National Statistics who does not accept Humanism as a ‘religion’ in terms of the census. This will have implications for them being placed in a ‘faith group’ committee
- Debate arose around having clarity as to what constitutes a ‘faith’ group because if Humanists have a place within committee A (Christian denominations and other religions and religious denominations) then what would stop other ‘world views’ such as atheism.
- SACRE meetings are open meetings and anyone can attend and observe these meetings

WASACRE will make further enquiries with the legal department of the Welsh Government. The Chair of WASACRE requested that SACREs wait for further guidance in relation to this matter.

## **7. Showcase of resources:**

**7.1 REMW** – RE Ideas are available to schools in the LA who subscribe.

### **7.2 Christian Aid**

A presentation was received by Eirian Samuel, Education Co-ordinator for Christian Aid in Wales, who referred to the links between education and development. She outlined a number of Christian Aid resources:

**a) Just Living?**

This resource supports the teaching of GCSE (full and short course) at KS4. The resource considers:

- Why do Christians help the poor?
- What is Christian Aid?
- What is poverty?
- Examples of emergency and long-term aid.

The resource includes worksheets, case studies, teacher guidance, films and PowerPoints and is available in Welsh and English on the Christian Aid website:

[www.christianaid.org.uk/learn](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/learn)

**b) Assemblies of the month** – acts of collective worship for primary and secondary schools are available every month on the Christian Aid website.

**c) Sessions in schools** – any schools interested in a workshop on Christian Aid are asked to contact Eirian Samuel - 02920844646

8. **Date of next meeting:** March 30<sup>th</sup> 2012 – Aberaeron, Ceredigion.