

Lancashire County Council

Lancashire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 26 November 2012 at 10.00 am in Cabinet Room 'D' - County Hall, Preston

1. Present

Christian and other Religious Groups appropriately reflecting the Principal Traditions in the Area

Roman Catholic Church

Ms J Busby
Mr B McMullen

The Free Churches Group

Mr C Wills

Teachers Associations

Mr D Fann (NAHT)
Mr P Martin (ASCL)
(Chair)
Mrs A Robinson (ATL)

Church of England

Miss L Fenton
Mrs J O'Rourke
Mr C Pountain

Lancashire County Council

County Councillor P Malpas
County Councillor Y Motala
Mr F Williams

Co-opted Members

Mrs K Cooper (LASGB)
Ms J Harris (Teachers in the
Secondary Sector)
Mrs J Sawyer (Teachers in the
Primary Sector)

Observers

Dr M Craig (Baha'i Faith)

Religious Education Consultant

Mrs H Harrison

Officers in Attendance

Mr J Hewitt
Mr J Mynott

2. Nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair

RESOLVED: That:

i) Mr Peter Martin be appointed Chairman of the SACRE for the ensuing year.

ii) Mr Francis Williams be appointed Vice-Chairman of the SACRE for the ensuing year.

3. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were presented on behalf of Mr N Anwar, Mr P Baker, Mr A Brennand, Rabbi D Braunold, Ms J Clarke, Ms J Crabtree, CC K Ellard, Mrs S J Greenhow, Ms C Mercier, Mr I Nakhuda, Mrs K Parekh, Mrs H Sage, Mrs E Saunderson, Mrs H Shukla, CC A Thornton and Mrs Y Taylor.

4. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Lancashire SACRE held on 24 September 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

5. SACRE Membership

Members considered a proposal to fill the vacancy for a co-opted member to represent the secondary sector on a shared basis between two teachers.

It was recognised that this would be beneficial for a number of reasons, including ensuring good attendance and representation, lessening the impact on an individual school, and gaining extra expertise.

On confirmation on the proposal, Joanne Harris was welcomed to the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the proposal to co-opt two teachers to share the representation of secondary schools on the SACRE be approved.

6. Collective Worship

Following on from the agreement of the protocol for visits at the last SACRE, consideration was now given to the most appropriate next steps.

It was proposed that schools known to or represented on the SACRE would form the "pilots" to offer a critical friend perspective on the visits.

The Committee noted that Jacquie Clarke had confirmed that her school, Hapton Primary, would be happy to be involved as a pilot school. David Fann also confirmed that Sherwood Primary in Fulwood would also be prepared to be involved.

Ms Busby, Councillor Motala, Mrs Robinson and Mrs Cooper all confirmed that they would be interested in participating in visits as part of the pilot.

It was agreed that visits would be co-ordinated by the Officer to the SACRE.

Mr McMullen invited SACRE members to attend the Christmas service at All Hallows Catholic College in Penwortham on Friday 21 December

RESOLVED: That the proposal to conduct pilot visits by SACRE members to attend Collective Worship in the schools identified be accepted.

7. Lancashire SACRE Development Plan 2011 - 2013

Members were update on progress against the Development Plan.

Priority 1: Standards and Quality of Provision of RE

- On track. It was confirmed that, where RE was identified in any Ofsted inspection report as being an area of concern, this would be reported to the SACRE.

Priority 2: Management of Lancashire SACRE and Partnership with the LA and other Key Stakeholders

- On track. The work of the Youth Voice was noted. In particular, SACRE thanked the schools involved in the Youth Voice work for their vital contribution.

Priority 3: The Effectiveness of the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus

- On track. The SACRE discussed the "leading teacher" model, and also the possible opportunities offered by new Teaching Schools. It was agreed that, where possible, SACRE should try to influence these developments to encourage high quality RE. Some concerns were also raised about the number and standard of new teachers of RE in training.

Priority 4: Collective Worship

- Not on track. Whilst the materials were updated and available, it was the case that take up amongst schools is still very low. Efforts would continue to make schools aware.

Priority 5: Contribution of SACRE to the Social and Racial Harmony Agenda

- On track.

RESOLVED: That the Development Plan update be noted.

8. SACRE Annual Report 2011/12

The SACRE considered the draft of the Annual Report. The shorter format with links to the Internet was approved. Comments from SACRE members were welcomed.

It was noted that the reference on the final page to the meeting of the SACRE at the Burnley and Pendle Faith Centre should refer to the tenth anniversary of the "Building Bridges" project.

It was confirmed that, when complete, the Annual Report would be sent to RE subject leaders in schools, and that responses would be monitored.

RESOLVED: That the draft Annual Report be approved.

9. RE Quality Mark Update

Members were presented with an update on the RE Quality Mark. It was reported that the programme had moved on quickly, and attention was drawn to the website, www.reqm.org, which presented information on the award, details of successful schools and some general good practice examples of work in RE which could be accessed by all schools.

It was reported that the cost of the accreditation process was £475 – comparable to similar schemes for other subjects – and lasted for 3 years.

RESOLVED: That SACRE take steps to increase awareness of the RE Quality mark and website to schools as appropriate.

10. RE Council RE Subject Review Consultation

SACRE considered the RE Subject Review consultation document issued by the REC. SACRE members discussed the matter in small groups.

In response to the specific questions asked, the SACRE were supportive of the REC and agreed with the statements made.

Members made a number of other more substantive comments, as follows:

- It was felt that there would have been merit in the Expert Panel being less heavily dominated by academics and including more teachers. However, it was noted that teachers were well represented in the list of expert witnesses.
- It was felt that the report lacked the voice of young people, and that this was a significant oversight
- Whilst the SACRE supported recommendation 2, it was felt that there was a danger that this emphasised core knowledge and the simple assimilation of facts and made no mention of the skills and attitudes that could be developed
- Alongside this, it was felt that more could be made of the person centred approach and transformational potential of RE teaching
- Members felt that the recommendations, when read separately from the full report, set out an unfairly negative message about the current position, where there was much excellent practice.
- In some parts of the report – for example sections 3.15 and 3.17, phrases like "too many" and "not enough" were used, and it was felt that this represented value judgements being made, rather than evidence based assessment.
- There was a preference for a few, clear, nationally agreed aims for RE. Whilst the locally determined nature of the curriculum was acknowledged, it would help if there were nationally comparable aims and standards.

- It was felt that current examination board practice on religion, philosophy and ethics was good and well balanced, and that attempts to separate the disciplines were misguided

The views of the SCARE would be collated, shared with all SACRE members, and fed back to the REC. In addition, individual members were encouraged to respond via the website.

11. Report of the Quality and Standards Sub-group

RESOLVED: That the report of the QSS Sub Group be noted.

12. National Update on Religious Education

Attention was drawn to the All Party Parliamentary Group on RE Enquiry on Teachers of RE. A call for evidence had been issued, and members of SACRE were encouraged to respond.

SACRE members were also encouraged to identify and highlight any examples of incidents or comments that could be used to support the aim of increasing the recognition of the importance of RE, for examples, quotes from celebrities in support of RE of which highlight the need for understanding of faiths.

13. Observers' Contributions

Dr Craig asked to record his acknowledgment of the quality and passion of the Lancashire SACRE and its members.

14. Correspondence

The attention of the SACRE was drawn to the Common Ground exhibition currently taking place at the Harris as part of Interfaith week.

The work of the Preston Faith Forum and the Burnley and Pendle Faith Centre in delivering a high quality Interfaith Week with many excellent events was recognised.

It was also suggested that an agenda item for the next QSS could consider the Pupil Attitude Questionnaire when looking at the impact of RE.

15. Date of the Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting of the Lancashire SACRE was noted as Monday 4 March 2013 to take place at County Hall, Preston.

Roy Jones
Assistant County
Secretary

County Hall
Preston