

Lancashire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 4 March 2013 at 10.00 am in Cabinet Room 'A' - County Hall, Preston

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 P Baker Mrs A Tidswell Mr C Wills
Hindu	Mrs K Parekh Mrs H Shukla
Islam	Mr S Jogi
Teachers Associations	Ms J Crabtree (NUT) Mr D Fann (NAHT) Ms S Greenhow (NASUWT) Mr P Martin (ASCL) Chair Mrs A Robinson (ATL)
Church of England Lancashire County Council	Mrs H Sage CC K Ellard CC A Thornton Mr F Williams
Co-opted Members	Mrs K Cooper (LASGB) Ms C Mercier (HE Sector) Mrs K Murry (Secondary Sector)
Observers	Mr A Brennand (Pagan Federation)
Officers in Attendance	Mr J Hewitt Mr J Mynott Mrs K Dale

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were presented on behalf of Mr N Anwar, Rabbi D Braunold, Dr M Craig, Miss L Fenton, CC P Malpas, CC Y Motala, Mr I Nakhuda, Mrs J O'Rourke, Mr C Pountain, Mrs E Saunderson, Mrs J Sawyer and Mrs J Singh.

Apologies were also received from Mrs Helen Harrison, Lancashire Consultant for RE.

The Chairman announced that Mrs Elaine Saunderson, SACRE Observer representing the Religious Society of Friends, had informed the Clerk that she

wished to relinquish observer status. Thanks would be sent to Mrs Saunderson for her work and input to the SACRE.

As this was the last meeting of the SACRE which County Councillor Albert Thornton would attend before standing down at the County Council elections, members joined with the Chairman in thanking him for his outstanding service to the SACRE as member, Chairman and Vice Chairman since it was first set up 1989.

The Chairman also welcomed Kate Murry, RE Teacher at the Hollins in Oswaldtwistle, to the meeting. Kate had been appointed as co-opted member representing teachers in the secondary sector jointly with Joanne Harris at the last meeting.

2. Minutes and matters arising

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Lancashire SACRE held on 26 November 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

3. SACRE Membership

It was noted that membership of the SACRE was renewed every four years coinciding with the County Council elections and that as this was an election year the Clerk would shortly be contacting all the nominating sponsoring bodies requesting nominations to serve for the forthcoming four year term. The current membership of the SACRE, determined locally, was as follows:

Group 1 - Christian and Other religions and denominations which appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area

- The Roman Catholic Church 3
- The Free Churches Group 4
- Islam 5
- Hinduism 2
- Judaism 1
- Sikhism 1
- Buddhism 1

Group 2 – The Church of England 5

Group 3 – Associations representing Teachers 5

Group 4 – The Local Authority 5

Each group carried one vote in matters to be determined by SACRE.

In addition, the SACRE constitution allowed the appointment of up to five co-opted members chosen from educational backgrounds. The SACRE also currently included three Observers. Co-opted members and Observers do not take part in any voting.

Members considered the 2011 census data available showing religions in Lancashire and noted that the figures did not necessarily reflect the significance of certain faiths nationally and internationally.

In light of the forthcoming renewal of membership, members commented as follows:

- The number of Pagans in Lancashire constituted 42% of people putting themselves in the 'Other' religion category and that therefore the change from 'Observer' status of the Pagan representative to full membership of Group 1 should be considered.
- Any request for a religion or denomination to be allocated a place in Group 1 would need to be supported by a robust case and, in the event of the SACRE agreeing such a change, a sponsoring nominating body would be identified and asked to make the nomination.
- Given that each of the four groups have one vote, there seemed to be no provision in the SACRE constitution for making a decision in the case of a tied vote. Some concerns relating to the disproportionate representation of very small religious groups were raised.
- Comments were made on the difficulty of representing the number of people who put themselves in the category of 'no religion.', although it was noted that, of the four groups represented on the SACRE, two were specific faith based, and two were not, demonstrating that not all representatives on SACRE came from a faith background.
- In the past, the SACRE had appointed a Humanist Observer who had rarely attended. It had also been approached by the British Humanist Association for full membership. The SACRE had made clear that it was open to all approaches and continued to be so, but nothing further had developed at that time.
- SACRE would continue to use the guidance and advice offered by NASACRE on nominating bodies and issues connected to representation.

In general, it was felt that the SACRE had a good balance of representation, was an effective body, and that whilst it would always be appropriate to consider amendments to the membership as circumstances changed, there was no significant current issue that required substantial revision to the principles of membership

However, it was agreed that there appeared to be a sound case for the consideration of incorporating Paganism into Group 1. It was agreed that a paper be presented to the next meeting of SACRE providing evidence to allow full consideration of the suggestion. The paper would also be able to set out general guidance to ensure SACRE remained appropriately representative.

RESOLVED: That:

- i. The current membership and process for membership renewal be noted.
- ii. A report be considered at the next meeting the SACRE to determine the proposal that Paganism be incorporated into Group 1, and setting out the principles for future amendments to membership.

4. Report of the Quality and Standards Sub-group

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the QSS Sub-group which took place on 5 February 2013 be noted.

5. Working with the Burnley and Pendle Faith Centre

Afrasiab Anwar, Community Faith Co-ordinator at the Burnley and Pendle Faith Centre presented a verbal report on working in the future with the Burnley and Pendle Faith Centre. It was proposed that the SACRE engage more effectively in the coming years with the Faith Centre in order to:

- Build the work of the Faith Centre into the SACRE Development Plan and develop links to support the Agreed Syllabus
- Help in linking people of different faiths with schools across Lancashire
- Use the Faith Centre as a hub for SACRE's work in developing the leadership of RE in Lancashire

RESOLVED: That the principle for the SACRE to work more closely with the Burnley and Pendle Faith Centre be agreed.

6. Report from the Advanced Skills Teacher (AST)

Jo Crabtree, AST Primary, verbally reported on her activities since the SACRE meeting in September 2012. Jo informed members that her role as AST was coming to an end with the disestablishment of the AST post at the end of March 2013.

Jo had continued to work on planning grids and the Agreed Syllabus website and intended to work on simplifying the website following comments from teachers regarding the number of 'clicks' it took to find information. Jo had presented at the Lancashire Primary RE Conference and received much positive feedback.

In response to an approach from a Headteacher in Clayton-le-Moors, Jo had written four planning grids for a Jehovahs Witness unit for Year 6.

By summer 2013 Jo envisaged that schools would be able to buy her in to talk about the Agreed Syllabus and that this would be a marketed service. Network meetings would need to become self sustaining.

The SACRE thanked Jo for all the hard work she had done whilst in post as AST, Primary.

RESOLVED: That:

- i. The report of the Advanced Skills Teacher, Primary be noted.
- ii. Jo Crabtree be thanked for the hard work she had done whilst in the post as Advanced Skills Teacher, Primary.

7. Common Ground - Information from the Pupil Attitude Questionnaire

RESOLVED: That the report on the Pupil Attitude Questionnaire, as presented, be noted.

8. Implementation of the SACRE Development Plan

This item was deferred until the next meeting due to time constraints.

9. Revision of the SACRE Development Plan

This item was deferred until the next meeting due to time constraints.

10. The future of RE in terms of initial Teacher Education

Carrie Mercier Co-opted member of the SACRE representing the Higher Education Sector, gave a presentation on developments in Initial Teacher Training and the impact on RE.

Members were informed that in the future schools would have a greater part to play in the design and delivery of Initial Teacher Training and recruitment and that 'School Direct' was a new pathway into teaching. This would mean that teacher training places would be allocated directly to schools instead of Universities or Higher Education (HE) providers. Schools would then work with an accredited provider of Initial Teacher Training to deliver the training. Only HE providers would be able to award degrees.

School Direct would be funded by fees paid by the student – with the help of a loan or a bursary. Another model, School Direct Salaried, would entail the school paying a salary funded by the Teaching Agency. The expected outcome would be that schools go on to employ the teachers that they have trained.

The new system might benefit:

- schools wanting to be more involved in recruitment of future teachers
- students who felt ready to go straight into school
- schools and teachers beginning to take greater responsibility for teacher training
- large or city schools with regular turnover of staff – helping with recruitment

Issues relating to the new system included:

- 99% of Newly Qualified Teachers were very satisfied with the existing provision
- Sustainability - once schools had recruited would they then want to offer more places the next year?
- Best provision worldwide ensures academic footing of Initial Teacher Training at university level.
- Different pathways suited different trainees.
- Trainees would see only one way of doing things

The University of Cumbria was the third largest provider of Schools Direct with 190 Secondary School Direct places allocated, 3 of which were specifically for RE. There were no subject-specific RE places included in the 119 Primary Schools Direct student places. In the next academic year, the number of places allocated to the PGCE in RE for secondary RE would be reduced from 40 to 8 therefore putting the programme under threat which could lead to the disappearance of specialist staff.

Members commented as follows on School Direct:

- Would faith schools be attractive to students from non-faith backgrounds
- Concern about the delivery of theory by schools
- Less than 1% of places would be for specialist RE Teachers
- That, nationally, Higher Education establishments might no longer be offering the PGCE in RE
- The new system had not been trialled and tested
- Some training schools might cherry pick students

RESOLVED: That Carrie Mercier be thanked for her very informative presentation on the future for Initial Teacher Training.

11. Collective Worship

Members considered a draft letter to Headteachers setting out the purpose of Collective Worship visits by SACRE members.

It was suggested that in the final line, the words 'Thank you for your time' be removed.

RESOLVED: That the letter to Headteachers setting out the purpose of Collective Worship visits by SACRE members, subject to the suggested amendment being made, be approved.

12. Dates for future SACRE meetings

Members agreed the next schedule of SACRE meeting dates as follows:

Monday 30 September 2013
Monday 25 November 2013
Monday 3 March 2014
Monday 16 June 2014

13. Correspondence

Correspondence had been received from the Lancashire Forum of Faiths informing the SACRE that they produced a newsletter every two months and asking whether a piece promoting the work of the SACRE could be written for inclusion.

RESOLVED: That an article promoting the work of the SACRE be written for inclusion in the forthcoming Lancashire Forum of Faiths newsletter.

14. Any Other Business

Harsha Shukla informed members that the Hindu Society Lancaster and Morecambe would be hosting a diversity event in Lancaster on 20 June 2013. Harsha also explained that an exhibition about the ancient Hindu religion was available for schools to use.

Ben McMullen informed the SACRE that All Hallows High School had been awarded the RE Quality Mark at gold level.

15. Date of the Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting of the Lancashire SACRE was noted as Monday 17 June 2013 to take place at County Hall, Preston.

Roy Jones
Clerk to the SACRE

County Hall
Preston

