

Lancashire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 25 November 2013 at 10.00 am in Cabinet Room 'D' - The Henry Bolingbroke Room, 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	Mrs A Tidswell
	Mr C Wills
Buddhism	Kelsang Pagpa
Islam	Mr N Anwar
	Mr S Jogi
	Mr H Mulla
	Mr I Nakhuda
Hinduism	Mrs H Shukla
Teachers Associations	Ms J Crabtree (NUT)
	Ms S Greenhow (NASUWT)
	Mr P Martin (ASCL)
	Chair
	Mr D Fann (NAHT)
	Mr L Ridings (ATL)
Church of England	Mrs J O'Rourke
	Mr J Wilson
Lancashire County Council	CC A Cheetham
	CC Y Motala
Co-opted Members	Ms J Clarke (NATRE)
	Ms J Harris (Teachers in the Secondary Sector)
	Ms C Mercier (Trainers in the Higher Education Sector)
Observers	Dr M Craig (Baha'i Faith)
	Mrs K Parekh (Hinduism)
RE Consultant	Mrs H Harrison
Officers in Attendance	Mr J Hewitt
	Mr J Mynott
	Mrs K Dale

Daleen ten Cate, United Reformed Church Ministerial Trainee, also attended the meeting.

1. Nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair

Resolved: That

- i. Mr Peter Martin be appointed Chair of the SACRE for the ensuing year.
- ii. County Councillor Yousuf Motala be appointed Vice-Chair of the SACRE for the ensuing year.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were presented on behalf of Mr P Baker, Mr A Brennand, County Councillor P Buckley, Mrs K Cooper, County Councillor K Ellard, Mr F Farrell, Miss L Fenton, Mrs H Sage and Mr F Williams.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2013.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Lancashire SACRE held on 7 October 2013, be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

4. Responding to the OfSTED report into RE (Realising the potential)

The Officer to the SACRE presented the response to the key issues highlighted in the Ofsted report into RE ("Realising the potential") building on the discussion at the last meeting of the QSS. It was reported that the key findings and recommendations of the Ofsted report had been based on evidence drawn from a national sample of 185 schools visited and that members of the QSS had expressed the opinion that the report did not reflect the position of RE in Lancashire but that the areas of concern listed should be used to help evaluate the situation in Lancashire.

Members considered and commented on the areas of concern highlighted in the report as follows:

- **Low standards and weak teaching** – It was felt that there was no particular problem in Lancashire, and that there were many examples of excellent teaching and high standards. It was suggested that monitoring and managing this was a key issue. The current SACRE Development Plan identified strategies to support teaching and learning through the provision of support networks, sharing good practice and training opportunities. The 2011 Lancashire Agreed Syllabus had a rich resources section to support high challenge teaching and learning. It was suggested that the development of assessment in RE was a key area for development.

It was reported that the current system of 'levels' used to report children's attainment and progress was likely to be removed with the introduction of the new curriculum in 2014. Schools would be able to introduce their own approaches to assessment and Ofsted inspections would be informed by whatever pupil tracking data schools chose to keep. This, it was suggested, could lead to a lack of standardisation.

- **Problems in developing a curriculum for RE and confusion about the purpose of RE** – it was noted that the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus had been praised for the focus placed on enquiry based learning and providing exemplification materials to support teachers and schools in developing the curriculum to meet their school's needs. The Ofsted report stated that the way to deal with the issues found was to base RE on enquiry learning. As the principle aim of the Lancashire syllabus was "to support pupils' personal quest for meaning by engaging enquiry into the question 'what is it to be human?' exploring answers offered by religion and beliefs" it was noted that Lancashire had already adopted this model. It was also noted that a neighbouring local authority had asked about purchasing the Lancashire syllabus.
- **Concerns about the leadership and management of RE** - it was reported that the professional development of teachers in RE was a key area of concern for SACRE and was highlighted in the Development Plan. The value of networks, good practice schools and the use of self evaluation frameworks such as the RE Quality Mark to support subject leaders was recognised. The development of effective assessment was again highlighted as a key issue for development.
- **Weaknesses in examination provision at Key Stage 4** – Sharing good practice amongst secondary schools provided an opportunity to further strengthen the quality of teaching in Key Stage 4 but remained a difficult issue to resolve – the pressures on the secondary curriculum were enormous, sometimes leaving little time to develop children's understanding.

It was noted that the Church of England had recently commissioned Alan Brine HMI to produce a similar report for C of E schools.

Resolved: That the response to the Ofsted Report into RE be noted.

5. SACRE Annual Report 2012 - 2013

Members considered the final draft of the SACRE Annual Report 2012 – 2013 to which information on Standards and Quality of Provision had now been added. It was reported that in 2013 at the end of Key Stage 1 performance fell slightly by around 1%, performance improved slightly at the end of Key Stage 2 and remained at around the same level at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, Lancashire reflected the national trend with an increase in the number of entries for the full Religious Studies GCSE course and a fall in the proportion of short course entries.

Resolved: That the SACRE Annual Report 2012 – 2013 be approved.

6. Report of the Quality and Standards Sub-group

With regard to future support for RE it was reported that Helen Harrison would be stepping down from her role as RE Consultant at the end of March 2014. A meeting had been arranged between the Officer to the SACRE, the RE Consultant, teachers and others at the Burnley and Pendle Faith Centre to discuss planning for the future and how to keep in touch with RE across the County in light of Helen's departure. The comment was made that it was important to keep a link between RE and the Special School sector.

The role of the faith sector was also an important factor in any future planning and it was noted that the next Annual SACRE Youth Conference was to be a joint project with the Burnley and Pendle Faith Centre.

Resolved: That the minutes of the Quality and Standards Sub-group which took place on 21 October 2013, be noted.

7. National Update

Helen Harrison, Lancashire Consultant for RE, presented a report on the state of RE nationally. The following points were highlighted:

- It was reported that the message coming from the DfE was that Michael Gove wanted 'RE to have a central place in the curriculum', that there were no plans to change legislation, and that they wanted to work closely with the Religious Education Council (REC) on GCSE content for 2016.
- As RE had not been part of the review of the National Curriculum the REC had carried out a parallel review of RE in England and had now published their report which included a National Curriculum Framework for RE. This report, with a Foreword by Michael Gove, was a non statutory document but would be a national point of reference for RE. Amongst the recommendations in the report were the following:
 - Developing more effective and coherent mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of RE
 - Promoting coherence and progression between 4-14 programmes of study and 14-19 examinations
 - Developing new structures and networks within and across the RE community so that its expertise is co-ordinated and utilised more effectively to improve the subject
 - Developing new assessment arrangements for RE
- The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for RE was now focusing on 'RE and Community Relations' and Helen Harrison had been asked to report on the success of the work of the Lancashire SACRE in this area.

Following the presentation, members commented as follows:

- Concern about the small number of RE Teacher training places now available and the impact this would have on the subject
- How to demonstrate the impact of RE on society
- That governors had a statutory duty to ensure the delivery of good RE

Resolved: That the report be noted.

8. Lancashire Youth Voice

Joanne Harris and Helen Harrison reported on the recent activities of the Youth Voice. Students had discussed what makes good RE and how the subject had impacted on them. The Lancashire Youth Voice fed into the Young Ambassadors scheme, via Broughton Business and Enterprise College thus promoting RE nationally.

Any secondary school using the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus was welcome to be part of Youth Voice which was currently made up of children from Years 8 and 9 to ensure continuity.

It was reported that All Hallows School, Preston, had now been awarded gold level in the RE Quality Mark.

9. Observers' Contributions

Dr Malcolm Craig, representing the Baha'i faith, reported that a series of successful events organised by Preston Faith Forum had taken place in Interfaith Week 2013, including 'Voices for Women in faith'.

10. Members' News

Carrie Mercier, Co-opted member representing teachers in the Higher Education Sector, informed members that a public lecture by Professor Brian Gates entitled: "What's the difference between Father Christmas and God? Religious language in the thinking of children and adults", was due to take place at 5.30pm on 9 December 2013 in the Hugh Pollard Lecture Theatre, University of Cumbria.

Carrie also informed members that Culham St Gabriels were inviting applications for bursaries from teachers for RE Teacher Training courses.

The Chair informed the Committee that Pete Baker, a representative of Free Churches on the SACRE, had asked that members be made aware of a consultation taking place on the new Burnley High School.

11. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting of the Lancashire SACRE was noted as Monday 3 March 2014 to take place at 10am in Cabinet Room D, County Hall, Preston.

Roy Jones
Clerk to the SACRE

County Hall
Preston