

Lancashire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 7 October 2013 at 10.00 am in Cabinet Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster 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	Mr P Baker
	Mr C Wills
Buddhism	Kelsang Pagpa
Islam	Mr H Mulla
	Mr I Nakhuda

Teachers Associations

Ms J Crabtree (NUT)
Ms S Greenhow (NASUWT)
Mr P Martin (ASCL)
Chair

Church of England

Mr L Ridings (ATL)

Miss L Fenton

Mrs J O'Rourke

Lancashire County Council

CC P Buckley

CC A Cheetham

CC K Ellard

CC Y Motala

Mr F Williams

Co-opted Members

Ms J Clarke

Mrs K Cooper

Mr F Farrell

Mrs K Murry

Observers

Mr A Brennand (Paganism)

Dr M Craig (Baha'i Faith)

Mrs H Shukla (Hinduism)

Ms Neetal Parekh (Hinduism)

RE Consultant

Mrs H Harrison

Officers in Attendance

Mr J Hewitt

Mr J Mynott

Mrs K Dale

Two students - Maisy Hardman and Charlie Laing - from the Hollins Technology College, Hyndburn, representing the Lancashire Youth Voice also attended the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were presented on behalf of Mr N Anwar, Rabbi D Braunold, Mr S Jogi, Mr C Pountain, Mrs H Sage and Mrs A Tidswell.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Lancashire SACRE held on 17 June 2013, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

The Chair reported the recent death of former County Councillor and Chairman of the SACRE, Albert Thornton. The Vice-Chair spoke about the funeral which he had attended in Morecambe.

3. SACRE Membership

Members noted the new membership of the SACRE following its re-constitution in July 2013 for a further four year period until July 2017.

It was reported that the places for the two Hindu representatives on SACRE were due to be considered by a member/officer panel as applications had been received from three different Hindu organisations.

Nominations were still being sought for representatives from the RC Diocese of Salford, the Lancashire Methodist District and the Sikh community via United Sikhs. It was noted that Mr John Wilson had now been nominated by the Church of England as a representative of Bradford and Ripon & Leeds Diocese.

The Chair welcomed Mr Les Ridings representing the Association of Teachers and Lecturers to the SACRE. Mr Ridings replaced Mrs Alice Robinson who had stepped down from the SACRE in July.

Mr Francis Farrell, co-opted member representing Teacher/Trainers in the Higher Education Sector, was welcomed to his first meeting. Mr Farrell shared the co-opted place on an annual basis with Carrie Mercier.

It was suggested that members' details should now be updated on the RE and Lancashire SACRE website and that a revised proforma be circulated to all members for this purpose.

RESOLVED: That the new membership of the SACRE following its re-constitution in July 2013 until July 2015 be noted.

4. SACRE Development Plan 2013 - 2015

Members considered the draft SACRE Development Plan 2013 – 2015 which had been re-drafted with regard to the comments made by members at both the last meeting of the SACRE and the Quality and Standards Sub-group. Amongst the suggestions made had been one to add a fifth priority to 'raise awareness of the status and value of RE and Collective Worship amongst different faiths, beliefs and traditions and community organisations' but it was felt that this theme was integral to the plan as a whole and could therefore be treated as a subset running through all the priorities.

Priority 4: 'To ensure that the provision of RE is informed by the views of stakeholders' was considered particularly important since it was recognised that the formal monitoring of RE and CW in individual schools was not an option for SACRE. The SACRE would, however, continue to work on an exception basis when monitoring school provision and respond to any specific issues raised. It was, however, more realistic to gather views from stakeholders: parents, Youth Voice, SACRE members, the QCI Partnership Development Group and from teachers through the network meetings to help monitor the impact of the plan and to identify examples of best practice.

It was reported that, whilst the SACRE had no formal links with diocesan schools, there were positive relationships, including through RE Quality Mark accreditation, attendance at training and development events and shared conferences. The SACRE Annual Report was also taken to the Diocesan Liaison Group for consideration

RESOLVED: That the SACRE Development Plan 2013 – 2015 be approved.

5. SACRE Annual Report 2012 -2013

Members considered a draft version of the SACRE Annual Report 2012 – 2013 produced as a statutory requirement and, as in recent years, only to be available electronically. The final draft version of the report including analysis of the GCSE examination results provided by Paul Dyson-Knight, Directorate for Children and Young People, would be considered further by the QSS at its next meeting on 21 October 2013, before being presented to the SACRE in its final version for approval at the November meeting prior to submission to NASACRE in December 2013.

6. Lancashire Youth Voice

Two Year 9 students representing Lancashire Youth Voice, Maisy Hardman and Charlie Laing, from the Hollins Technology College gave a presentation on why they enjoyed RE and on being part of Lancashire Youth Voice (formerly the Youth SACRE). Year 9 pupils were now involved in the Youth Voice to ensure a certain amount of continuity.

At the last Youth Voice meeting, held at St Annes synagogue, students had discussed how to support the SACRE Development Plan, reporting on their activities to involve parents as stakeholders. It appeared that RE had come out as the top subject with parents in terms of results and teaching, coming second to PE with students. They had also discussed how to inform more schools about the SACRE and Youth Voice. Holding the meeting at the synagogue had enabled students to engage practically with a different faith.

During a question and answer session the following comments were made that:

- Educating parents on the merits of RE was beneficial
- Parents needed to be encouraged to understand more about the nature of RE
- Visiting places of worship opened up discussion on different religions and cultures and broadened the mind
- RE helped students understand other peoples' religions and points of view making integration in the classroom much easier

RESOLVED: That the Lancashire Youth Voice students, Maisy Hardman and Charlie Laing, from the Hollins Technology College, be thanked for their most informative and interesting presentation.

7. Report of the Quality and Standards Sub-group

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Quality and Standards Sub-group which took place on 17 July 2013 be noted.

8. National Update

Helen Harrison, Lancashire Consultant for RE, presented a report on the current state of RE nationally, highlighting the following points:

- There had been much national coverage in the media on the state of RE following the publication of the Ofsted report: 'RE: Realising the potential' <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/religious-educationrealising-potential> The report recognised the importance of RE as a subject, but contained strong criticism of the approach currently taken by the government and many schools.
- Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education, was reported as now accepting that it had been a mistake not to include RE as one of the humanities options as part of the EBacc. It was reported that it had been his view that RE would be protected by existing statute. It was widely felt in the RE community that there were issues with RE at present, but that this was a structural and systemic problem, to do with government and inspection priorities and performance measures imposed on schools and not an issue with individual teachers of RE.
- High quality RE training was available in Higher Education but was dependent on investment in it by schools
- Local Authorities needed to ensure that sufficient resources were available to carry out a review of the syllabus via Agreed Syllabus Conferences.
- Whether the right structures were in place to support RE. SACREs were expected to monitor but there currently existed a difference between their duties and powers.
- The Religious Education Council was due to publish its Review of the subject on 23 October 2013. The full report would include the curriculum framework, a discussion of the wider context for RE and a series of

questions to inform future work and development, as well as the recommendations of the Expert Panel report and the evaluation of the Review.

Members commented on Helen's report as follows:

- SACREs needed to stress to school governing bodies their obligation to RE
- The QSS should review the SACRE Development Plan against key issues in the Ofsted report.
- The Officer to the SACRE could discuss with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools and the Lead Member for Schools the value of promoting support for RE further
- That RE contributed massively to the whole school environment and could contribute to good results if treated equally with other subjects

RESOLVED: That:

- i) The Quality and Standards Sub-group review the SACRE Development Plan against key issues in the Ofsted report.
- ii) The Officer to the SACRE discuss with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools and the Lead Member for Schools the value of promoting support for RE further.

9. Observers' Contributions

Harsha Shukla, representing Hinduism informed members that:

- she was working on a youth mela to be held next year in Ashton Hall, Lancaster, in conjunction with the Police
- on 26 October 2013, there was to be Diwali celebration raising money for breast care at Lancaster Royal Infirmary
- from 5 – 13 October 2013, 9 nights of celebrations of the festival of the mother goddess were taking place at Preston Temple to which any children were invited to attend

Andrew Brennand, representing Pagans, voiced strong concern about remarks made about Paganism by a SACRE member at the last meeting on 17 June 2013 under Item 3 - SACRE membership. Mr Brennand had not been present at the meeting but the remarks had been reported to him by another member. The Chair stated that the remarks made were in no way the view of the SACRE and that counter remarks had been put forward during discussion. The remarks made had no bearing on the criteria upon which the decision for Item 3 was made.

10. Members' News

Mr Ismaeel Nakhuda reported that the Lancashire Council of Mosques now had a new Chairman, Mr Abdul Hamid Quereshi.

11. Correspondence

Correspondence had been received from Accord Coalition asking for nominations of schools for the 2014 Accord Inclusivity Award. The award was for a school that had most promoted inclusion, cohesion, and the growth of mutual understanding, particularly on the grounds of religion and belief.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting of the Lancashire SACRE, also to be the AGM, was noted as Monday 25 November 2013 to take place at 10am in Cabinet Room D, County Hall, Preston.

Roy Jones
Clerk to the SACRE

County Hall
Preston