

**Lancashire SACRE
Meeting to be held 25 November 2013**

Lancashire SACRE - Quality and Standards Sub-group

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 21 October 2013 at 2.00pm in
Cabinet Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston**

Present

Mr P Martin
County Councillor P Buckley
Ms J Clarke
Mrs K Cooper
County Councillor Y Motala
Dr M Craig
Ms J Harris
Mr I Nakhuda
Mr L Ridings

Representing

ASCL (Chair)
Lancashire County Council
NATRE
LASGB
Lancashire County Council
Bahai Observer
Teachers in the Secondary Sector
Islam
ATL

Officers in Attendance

Mr J Hewitt
Mr J Mynott
Mrs K Dale

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from CC A Cheetham, Rabbi Katanka, Ms L Fenton, Mr F Farrell, Mrs H Sage, Mr F Williams and RE Consultant Mrs H Harrison.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2013, be agreed as a true record.

**3. The OfSTED Report: RE : Realising the potential and
Reviewing the SACRE Development Plan in light of the Ofsted report**

Item 3, The Ofsted Report: RE: Realising the potential and Item 4: Reviewing the SACRE Development Plan in light of the Ofsted report, were considered together at the meeting.

Members considered in detail the key findings and recommendations of the Ofsted report which had been based on evidence drawn from a national sample of 185 schools visited. They then compared the national findings with the very different situation in Lancashire. The sample of schools did not include voluntary aided schools and since in Lancashire over half of primary and a substantial

number of secondary schools are voluntary aided, this report did not refer to them.

It was noted that Part A of the Ofsted report highlighted eight areas of concern and that Part B provided examples of effective practice using enquiry as a basis for improving pupils' learning. The report found that RE was too often taught with a focus on knowledge, was unrelated to the rest of the curriculum and was not assessed effectively.

The areas of concern set out in the report were as follows:

- Low standards
- Weak teaching
- Problems in developing a curriculum for RE
- Confusion about the purpose of RE
- Weak leadership and management
- Weaknesses in examination provision at Key Stage 4
- Gaps in training
- The impact of recent changes in education policy

Members of the QSS 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. The Lancashire SACRE provided valuable support in developing and promoting RE and there existed many examples of good practice which it was very important to share with other schools. It was noted by the group that the Officer to the SACRE and the Consultant for RE provided outstanding support.

It was suggested that changes in policy nationally had contributed to the findings of the report. RE was not routinely subject to inspection by Ofsted and might not therefore be a priority in School Improvement Plans. It was felt that the report provided the opportunity for the national situation to be redressed.

In order to gather evidence on the current situation of RE in Lancashire, the following strategies were suggested:

- Looking at the responses in the Pupil Attitude Questionnaire (PAQ)
- Feedback from network groups of schools
- Feedback from parents (the Lancashire Youth Voice was already gathering information)

Themes that emerged could be checked against the report findings and then investigations could be considered in areas where further information was required.

With regard to the report recommendations for local authorities, in partnership with SACREs and Agreed Syllabus Conferences, it was felt that the three recommendations made were already in place and working in Lancashire but that they could be built on by:

- Building the network groups further and sharing good practice
- Focussing training on teaching – a priority for primaries as most teaching is undertaken by a class teacher
- Supporting secondary heads of department
- Assessment – possibly by the Local Authority providing a model for schools to consider
- Using parents more effectively (via the Youth Voice) –the Development Plan would be strengthened to reflect this
- Monitoring what pupils thought of RE via the Pupil Attitude Questionnaire
- Ensuring good progression from primary to secondary – possibly by joint primary/secondary networking
- Asking primary children to give SACRE their views

It was suggested that this information, when gathered, be presented as a report to SACRE, highlighting strong and weak areas, at the Spring 2014 meeting.

Resolved: That the monitoring information be presented to the SACRE for consideration at its Spring 2014 meeting.

4. Update on the SACRE Annual Report 2012 - 2013

Members considered the draft SACRE Annual Report 2012 - 2013 and noted that the GCSE data (proportion of students in Lancashire gaining Grade C or above as against the national average) was yet to be added. The Annual Report would be published on the web site in December and also submitted to NASACRE for information.

5. Future Support for RE

The QSS was informed that Helen Harrison planned to step down from her role as RE Consultant at the end of March 2014.

Members considered a report which set out some key support functions which were important if Lancashire was to continue to provide effective support for RE and Collective Worship in the future. It also suggested a number of approaches to providing support for schools in Lancashire.

Support functions included:

- Providing direct, face to face, support for teaching the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus
- Sharing good practice across Lancashire schools
- Promoting excellence in RE – for example by linking into school governing bodies
- Developing 'Values-led' education – making an explicit link between RE and values-led education to ensure that RE is not just about fact but

focuses on notions and values and recognises and celebrates diversity through SMSC

- Supporting the further development of the Agreed Syllabus – by finding and sharing more examples of good practice
- Maintaining and developing the Youth Voice
- Supporting schools in developing and assessing learning in RE
- Ensuring that teaching in RE in Lancashire is informed by regional and national developments

There were a number of models of delivery which provided support for RE and Collective Worship in community schools in different local authority areas. Lancashire had already run the leading teacher model but the take up had been minimal and so it was unlikely that this would be funded again.

Currently the RE Consultant was commissioned for 29 days per year and it was suggested that 2 or 3 people could be commissioned to carry out work on RE in the future. More use could be made of existing resources such as the Burnley and Pendle Faith Centre and having a hub school in every District as a first point of contact. New ways of working would need to be developed. A meeting was to be held with teachers on 26 November at the Faith Centre to discuss the way forward, which all SACRE members would be welcome to attend if they wished.

The Officer to the SACRE paid tribute to the teachers – Joanne Harris, Kate Murray and Jo Crabtree who had pledged support for this new way of working and who were prepared to build on it.

It was suggested that a report on new ways of working in light of the RE Consultant stepping down be brought to the Spring meeting of the SACRE.

Resolved: That a report on new ways of working be brought for consideration to the Spring meeting of the SACRE.

6. Date of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Quality and Standards Sub-group was noted as Monday 20 January 2014 to be held at 2.00pm in Cabinet Room C, County Hall, Preston

Roy Jones
Clerk to the SACRE

County Hall
Preston