

Lancashire SACRE - Quality and Standards Sub-group

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 12th May, 2014 at 10.00 am in Cabinet Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

Chair

Mr P Martin, (Representing the ASCL)

Committee Members

County Councillor Y Motala, (Lancashire County Council)

County Councillor P Buckley, (Lancashire County Council)

County Councillor A Cheetham, (Lancashire County Council)

Reverend P Clarke, (Representing the Methodist Church)

Mr S Jones, (Representing the Roman Catholic Church)

Mr J Wilson, (Representing the Church of England)

Ms J Harris, (Representing Teachers in the Secondary Sector)

Officers

Mrs H Harrison, Independent RE Consultant.

Mr J Hewitt, Head of Quality and Continuous Development, LCC Children and Young Peoples Directorate.

Mr J Mynott, Committee Support Team Leader, LCC Office of the Chief Executive

Mr M Neville, Senior Committee Support Officer, LCC Office of the Chief Executive

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Kelsang Pagpa, Mrs H Sage, Ms J Clarke, Ms C Mercier and Mrs J Sabour.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

It was noted that whilst Mrs H Harrison - Independent RE Consultant, had attended the last meeting she had been omitted from the list of officers in the Minutes.

Resolved: That, subject to the addition of Mrs H Harrison to the list of Officers in attendance, the Minutes of the meeting held on the 20th January 2014 are confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

As Mr Hewitt, the Head of Quality and Continuous Development, had been delayed the Chair informed the meeting that item 6 on the agenda would be taken as the next item of business.

3. All Party Parliamentary Group report into Religious Education and community relations - update.

Mrs Harrison, presented a report on the above and informed the Group that the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on RE had looked at community cohesion through a series of sessions held between December 2013 and February 2014.

It was noted that the report presented was a summary and that a more detailed report would be published in the future and made available via the RE Council website.

In considering the report the Group examined the findings of the APPG and discussed some of the issues highlighted under the 'remaining questions' section, particularly in relation to how far RE addressed issues of socio economic inequality and its importance in developing social cohesion.

It was suggested that the Lancashire syllabus already addressed many issues around community cohesion/socio economic inequality through discussions about wealth/status and attitudes towards charity. It was recognised that discussions around these subjects could involve some controversial issues and so there was a need to ensure that teachers had sufficient training/support. It was also noted that some of the available resources often highlighted the differences between people rather than the similarities and that the Lancashire syllabus focus on the shared human experience was appropriate.

There was some concern that the question of inequalities within society was not sufficiently addressed across the wider curriculum and it was suggested that more work needed to be done around intercultural attitudes and how that could affect cohesion. It was suggested that members of the SACRE be asked to provide examples of approaches to charity within individual religions which could then be used to inform the syllabus.

Resolved:

1. That the report from the All Party Parliamentary Group on RE regarding community cohesion be referred to the full SACRE for consideration.
2. That more work be done to consider intercultural education within the syllabus and the contribution which could be made by SACRE members.
3. That training and resources be developed to support teachers to tackle controversial issues such as inequalities.
4. That a section be included in the SACRE Annual Report in connection with how the Lancashire syllabus can help to tackle issues around community cohesion and socio economic inequality.
5. That the report of the All Party Parliamentary Group on RE on community cohesion is referred to the Youth SACRE as a possible topic for future work.

4. Support for Religious Education.

Further to the discussion at the last meeting of the full SACRE in March regarding support for teaching/learning RE in 2014/15 Mr Hewitt informed the Group that individuals had been assigned to each of the items in the programme as set out in the report.

It was reported that some marketing of available courses had already been undertaken with some of those courses being fully subscribed. Further marketing was planned and information would be circulated via the County Council and SACRE websites.

With regard to the development of the Burnley Faith Centre RE offer it was noted that previously the work of the Centre had been focused on East Lancashire but its use as a pan Lancashire resource was being considered.

The support from specialist leaders in RE through Teaching Schools was discussed and it was noted that generally the recruitment of new RE teachers in Lancashire mirrored the national position with a small number of places being available. It was reported that filling available places was also problematic and it was suggested that more detailed information on that point be presented to the next meeting.

Resolved:

1. That Helen Harrison and Joanne Harris are congratulated on the work done to date in relation to the future development of a programme of support for teaching/learning RE
2. That a report regarding the recruitment of teachers into RE is presented to the next meeting.

5. Feedback on Collective Worship from SACRE meeting held on the 3rd March 2014.

The Group considered a report on the comments made at the last full SACRE in relation to Collective Worship and noted it had been recommended that any members interested in visiting schools which took part in Collective Worship be provided with training ahead of such visits. Mr Hewitt advised the Group that the intention was for a training session to be provided after the next scheduled meeting of the full SACRE. Members agreed that this should take place in the new academic year so that visits could then be undertaken during the autumn term.

With regard to the information/guidance on Collective Worship (Mirrors and Doors) which was available via the SACRE website it was noted that Officers were in discussions with Religious Education Today in relation to future joint working arrangements and marketing of the resource.

Resolved:

1. That the views from the full SACRE on the 3rd March 2014 are noted.
2. That arrangements be made for a training session for members to be held immediately after the meeting of the full SACRE on the 29th September 2014.
3. That Officers continue to explore with Religious Education Today future arrangements in relation to the marketing of the updated 'Mirrors and Doors' guidance on Collective Worship

6. Strategies for monitoring Religious Education.

A brief report was presented in connection with the outcome of discussions at the full SACRE on the 3rd March 2014 in relation to its monitoring and evaluation role.

With regard to the proposal to gather information from a small number of schools Mr Hewitt suggested that this could be achieved by submitting an agreed set of questions to a sample of schools and that proposed questions could be brought to the next meeting for discussion.

Resolved:

1. That in order to assist the full SACRE to fulfil its monitoring and evaluation role suggestions for three questions be presented to the next meeting for discussion with a view to them being put to a sample of schools in the autumn term
2. That a report on the findings of the information gathering exercise referred to in 1 above is presented to the full SACRE on the 24th November 2014.

7. National Update on Religious Education

Helen Harrison circulated two papers to the members of the Group for discussion.

The first paper showed maps depicting the regional RE activity in relation to the following four categories and the Group noted that there was a significant cluster in the North West in relation to the first three.

- RE Quality Mark award winning schools.
- RE Leaders: Specialist Leaders of Education, Advanced Skills Teachers and Lead Practitioners.
- National Association of Teachers of RE Affiliated Schools.
- Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants Regional hubs.

The second document set out the national view of the relationship between the various potential partners involved in regional RE activity and showed RE teachers at the centre. It was noted that whilst SACREs were included on the diagram they were shown as being one of many potential partners. However, in Lancashire it was suggested that the SACRE had a much more integral role in working with partner organisations in order to support RE Teachers. In view of the apparent difference in approach and the view that nationally schools should seek to work with more independent groups it was suggested that a report be brought to a future meeting regarding the relationship between SACRE and schools in Lancashire.

Resolved: That a report be presented to the meeting on the 9th February 2015 regarding the future relationship between SACRE and schools in Lancashire.

8. Programme of Meetings for 2014/15

A proposed programme of meetings for 2014/15 was presented for consideration and whilst the Group agreed the dates it was suggested that Officers check to ensure that they did not clash with any religious events or festivals which could impact on the ability of members to attend.

Resolved: That the 2014/15 programme of meetings for the SACRE Quality and Standards Sub Group, as set out below, are agreed subject to confirmation that the dates do not clash with any religious festivals or events.

Monday 1st September 2014
Monday 20th October 2014
Monday 9th February 2015
Monday 18th May 2015

All meetings to be held at 10am in Cabinet Room B - the Diamond Jubilee Room at County Hall, Preston.

9. Date of the next meeting

It was noted that subject to confirmation that the date did not clash with any religious festivals/events the next meeting of the SACRE Quality and Standards Sub Group would be held at 10am on Monday 1st September 2014 in Cabinet Room B - the Diamond Jubilee Room at County Hall, Preston.

Ian Fisher
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall
Preston