

Working with Local SACREs through the development of Hubs

Following the recent OfSTED report on the quality of Religious Education in schools in England (RE: Realising the potential) a number of bodies have suggested that there is a need for collaborative working in order to provide support for the teaching and learning of RE.

The importance of working together to promote high quality RE was highlighted at the recent NASACRE conference (see previous item on the agenda) where a significant number of SACREs raised concerns over their capacity to sustain their support for schools in a climate where resources are increasingly stretched.

A number of different models are currently being promoted, some of which do not see a major role for SACREs in developing support for RE in the future. However, on the South Coast of England a number of local authorities have come together over the past twelve months to develop a Hub model where representatives of local SACREs meet to share concerns, challenges, good practice and coordinate resources. Although a number of the SACREs in the Hub share a common Agreed Syllabus many do not, but the feedback from members of the network has been positive.

Following a meeting of the Officer to Lancashire SACRE, the RE consultant and a teacher representative from Lancashire SACRE it was felt that the Hub model may be a useful way to strengthen the work of SACREs in the northern part of the North West. Whilst there is no blueprint for an effective network of SACREs it was suggested that a Hub approach could:

- Strengthen provision for professional development
 - Share good practice in the working of SACREs
 - Identify common challenges facing SACREs
 - Provide a stronger base for raising concerns about the future development of SACREs
 - Make more efficient use of resources across a network of SACREs
- The proposal is to invite a number of SACREs in the northern part of the North West to a meeting in July 2014 to discuss the value of developing a SACRE Hub (see attached draft letter from the Chair).

DRAFT LETTER

Dear Colleague,

I attended the Annual General Meeting and Conference of NASACRE on May 22nd, along with a number of other representatives from the North West. One of my colleagues took part in a seminar led by Hampshire SACRE which showcased the work they are doing with a number of neighbouring authorities, to highlight the issues facing individual SACREs and to consider how their work might be strengthened through collaboration.

The strengths of individual SACREs and the challenges they face may differ but the experience in the Hampshire region suggests that collaboration has proved useful. Our purpose should be to sustain the best possible support for RE in challenging times – a theme which ran through the NASACRE conference.

With this in mind, I would like to invite you to a meeting of SACREs from the northern part of the North West, at which we would discuss the value of establishing a local “hub”.

The **initial meeting will be held on 14th July at 2pm** at the Woodlands Conference Centre in Chorley, and we could cater for up to 3 representatives from each SACRE (at no charge to you).

I recognise you may already have effective links with other SACREs, but if this development is of interest to you, please let us know by contacting Tracy Matheson on or by email at tracy.matheson@lancashire.gov.uk

I look forward to working with you towards our common goal.

Yours sincerely

Peter Martin
Chairman of the Lancashire SACRE