

Lancashire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 16th June, 2014 at 10.00 am in Cabinet Room 'D' - The Henry Bolingbroke Room, County Hall, Preston

Christian and other religious groups appropriately reflecting the principal traditions in the area.

The Roman Catholic Church Ms J Busby
Mr S Jones

The Free Churches Group Mr C Wills
Mr P Baker

Islam Miss I Hussain
Mr I Nakhuda

Hinduism Ms V Chauhan
Mrs H Shukla

Teacher Associations Mr P Martin (ASCL) - Chair
Ms J Crabtree (NUT)
Mr D Fann (NAHT)
Mrs S Greenhow (NAS/UWT)
Mr L Ridings (ATL)

Church of England Mrs J O'Rourke
Mr J Wilson

Lancashire County Council County Councillor P Buckley
County Councillor Y Motala

Dr M Craig* (Bahá'í Faith)

*Dr Craig replaced Mrs J Sabour for this meeting.

Officers in attendance

Mr J Hewitt - Head of Quality and Continuous Improvement, Lancashire County Council, Children and Young People Directorate.

Mr J Mynott - Committee Support Team Leader, Lancashire County Council, Office of the Chief Executive.

Mr M Neville - Senior Committee Support Officer, Lancashire County Council, Office of the Chief Executive.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from, Mrs A Tidswell, Rev P Clarke, Mr H Mulla, County Councillor K Ellard, Mr F Williams, Mrs K Cooper, Mr A Brennand and Kelsang Pagpa and were presented on behalf of County Councillor A Cheetham, Mr B McMullen, Mrs H Sage and Miss L Fenton.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Resolved: That, subject to the amendment of a typographical error in relation to item 11, the Minutes of the meeting held on the 3rd March 2014 are confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3. Minutes of the Quality and Standards Sub Group.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Quality and Standards Sub Group on the 12th May 2014 were presented for consideration. With regard to item 7 it was suggested that the information circulated at the meeting had not accurately represented the regional activity of the Association of RE Inspectors as it was a Trans Pennine group. In response it was proposed that the Minutes be amended to show that each of the four categories listed had significant clusters of activity in the North West.

Resolved: That item 7 in the Minutes of the meeting of the Quality and Standards Sub Group from the 12th May 2014, be amended by deleting the words 'in relation to the first three' and replacing them with 'in each area of support'.

4. The Young Ambassadors for RE programme

Mr Hewitt informed the meeting that unfortunately, due to other commitments, it had not been possible for students from Broughton Business and Enterprise College to attend the meeting to give a presentation in relation to the Young Ambassadors for RE programme.

Resolved: That the presentation be deferred to the next meeting on the 29th September 2014 in agreement with Broughton Business and Enterprise College.

5. Monitoring Religious Education

Mr Hewitt referred to discussions at the last SACRE and also at the Quality and Standards Sub Group (QSS) in connection with the monitoring of Religious Education.

It was reported that in recent years Ofsted reports had moved away from specific subject based reports and towards overall achievement and provision within schools, with 'Realising the Potential' being the last report on RE in October 2013.

The County Council had a good relationship with schools in Lancashire and was in a good position to work with schools to discuss RE. Information on the attainment of pupils at Key Stage 1, 2 and 3 and the take up of GCSE and subsequent results would also be valuable in monitoring standards in RE. Further information was also obtained through the pupil attitude questionnaire and Youth Voice.

In accordance with the decision of the QSS a series of questions around the Curriculum, Teaching and Leadership had been developed for submission to a sample of around 10 schools in order to gather further information to assist with monitoring. It was noted that the sample would include a variety of schools at different levels but would not include any that were currently in a category of concern. When considering the proposed questions members of the SACRE suggested that an additional question be included under the Leadership heading in relation to governance and that one of the proposed questions under Teaching be expanded to reflect the value of RE and whether children were inspired by teachers to take the subject further. It was also suggested that the questions relating to the identification of schools needed be placed at the beginning of each section.

Members also noted that in the past Ofsted had highlighted the importance of RE, though it was felt that little had been done since then to promote the subject. As a result it was suggested that the Chair write to Ofsted and ask for a response regarding the inclusion of RE in the inspection of schools.

Resolved:

1. That the following questions are submitted to a sample of 10 schools during the autumn 2014 term in order to gather information to assist in the monitoring and evaluation of RE across Lancashire.

Curriculum

- Are the guidance and support materials for the Agreed Syllabus helpful in developing the RE curriculum?
- Is RE taught in line with the Agreed Syllabus?

Teaching

- Are there any specific professional development needs in RE?
- Are teachers confident in teaching the Agreed Syllabus for RE?
- Is the quality of teaching in RE good or better?
- Do children enjoy and value RE lessons and want to take the subject further?

Leadership

- Are there any specific professional development needs in the leadership of RE?
- Are subject leaders confident in leading RE across the school?
- Is subject leadership effective in RE?

2. That an additional question be included under the Leadership heading in relation to governance and that governing bodies be provided with details of the membership of the SACRE and the faith groups represented.
3. That a report on the findings of the monitoring specified at 1 above be presented to the SACRE in the spring of 2015 for consideration.
4. That the Chair write to Ofsted and ask for their comment in relation to the statement made in a previous report about the importance of RE.

6. Community Cohesion report from the All Party Parliamentary Group.

The report from the All Party Parliamentary Group on RE regarding community Cohesion, which was discussed at the last Quality and Standards Sub Group, was presented for consideration. It was noted that when referring the report to the SACRE for discussion the Sub Group had made the following comments.

- That more work be done to consider intercultural education within the syllabus and the contribution which could be made by SACRE members.
- That training and resources be developed to support teachers to tackle controversial issues such as inequalities.
- 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.
- 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.

During the discussion it was noted that training was available for representatives of faith groups in order to assist them when visiting schools to speak with pupils and it was recognised this would contribute to achieving some of the bullet points above. In response to a query it was suggested that an inclusion group for Preston City Council would not include a representative for teachers and Mr Hewitt stated that he could help establish a contact for the group if that would be helpful.

It was also reported that parents and pupils were in the process of producing text in relation to the Mormons and Jehovahs Witnesses and it was suggested that further discussion take place outside of the meeting in relation to the content before it was made available for use in schools.

Resolved: That the report and comments from the SACRE are noted.

7. Report from NASACRE

The Chair informed the meeting that the following points had been raised in response to the speech given by Stephen Lloyd MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Religious Education, at the NASACRE Annual General Meeting on the 22nd May 2014.

- Every SACRE should raise its own profile - with MPs, Elected Members, Headteachers, and Governors who held responsibility for compliance with the law.
- Each SACRE needed to have its eye on sustainability/renewal/succession planning.
- It was clear that new ways of working would need to evolve as LAs employed fewer and fewer professional RE advisors.

With regard to the list of 20 things which SACREs could do which was set out in the report Mr Hewitt reported that many of the items had already been addressed in Lancashire or would be taken into account by planned future action. He added that consideration would be given to the following points of note for Lancashire which would then be used to inform future action.

- Working with Teacher and Headteacher Associations to raise awareness of the role of the SACRE, and the importance of RE in the whole school performance
- Increasing contact with ITT providers and Teaching Schools in respect of recruitment/CPD for RE teachers
- Using the LA resource of a Press Office to highlight good practice/relevant news
- Promoting the RE Quality Mark
- Ensuring the Annual Report was suitably disseminated within the LA which is responsible for it.
- Considering the issue of training for members of SACRE.
- Considering the role of elected members.
- Considering the role of Faith representative members of SACRE.
- Considering the development of a RE Hub with local SACREs.

Resolved:

1. That the update from the NASACRE Annual General Meeting on the 22nd May 2014 is noted.
2. That the points of note in relation to Lancashire, as set out above, be explored further as part of the training session to be held after the next SACRE on the 29th September 2014.

8. Working with Local SACREs

Mr Hewitt informed the meeting that at the recent NASACRE conference a significant number of SACREs had raised concerns regarding their capacity to

sustain support for schools in a climate where resources are limited. In response it was suggested that the Chair write to local authorities in the northern part of the North West and invite them to a meeting to explore the possibility of establishing a Hub, where representatives of local SACREs could meet in order to:

- 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 and
- Make more efficient use of resources across a network of SACREs

Whilst it was recognised that not all authorities may wish to get involved it was suggested that as Blackpool and Warrington both used the same Agreed Syllabus as Lancashire there could be merit in at least those authorities working together. It was also noted that the intention was not to approach authorities in Merseyside as they were in the process of making their own alternative arrangements.

In the event that a Hub was established, consideration would be given in the future as to the composition and membership of the body to ensure that it was effective.

Resolved:

1. That the Chair write to local authorities in the northern part of the North West and invite them to send up to 3 representatives from their SACRE to a meeting on the 14th July 2014 at the Woodlands Conference Centre to explore the possibility of establishing a local 'Hub'.
2. That the SACRE be kept informed of future developments regarding the establishment of the Hub for SACREs in the North West.

9. Observers' Contributions

Dr Craig informed the meeting that the Preston Faith Forum would be holding its AGM at 6pm on Wednesday 18th June 2015 at Livesey House UCLan, Heatley Street, Preston.

10. Members' News

There were no updates from the members of the SACRE.

11. Date of the next meeting

Referring to the previous discussion in relation to item 4 the Chair reminded the meeting pupils from Broughton Business and Enterprise College would be invited to give their presentation on the Young Ambassadors for RE programme at the

next meeting which would be followed by a training session for members of SACRE.

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting of the SACRE would be held at 10am on the 29th September 2014 in Cabinet Room 'C' - the Duke of Lancaster Room at County Hall, Preston, and followed by a training session for members between 11.30am and 1.30pm.

Roy Jones
Clerk to the SACRE

County Hall
Preston