

Lancashire SACRE - Quality and Standards Sub-group

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 1st September, 2014 at 10.00 am in Cabinet Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

Chair

Mr Peter Martin, (Representing the ASCL)

Committee Members

Mr John Wilson, (Representing the Church of England)

Mr Leslie Ridings, (Representing ATL)

County Councillor Peter Buckley, (Representing Lancashire County Council)

County Councillor Yousuf Motala, (Representing Lancashire County Council)

Joanne Harris, (Teachers in the Secondary Sector)

Mrs Joy Sabour, (Representing the Baha'i Faith)

Officers

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

Mr J Mynott, Committee Support Team Leader, Democratic Services, OCE.

Mr M Neville, Senior Committee Support Officer, Democratic Services, OCE.

Mrs H Harrison, Independent RE Consultant.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were presented on behalf of Mr S Jones, Mr C Wills Reverend P Clarke, Mrs H Shukla, Mrs H Sage, Miss L Fenton, County Councillor A Cheetham, Mr F Williams, Mrs K Murry, Ms J Clarke, Mr F Farrell and Ms C Mercier.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Mrs Harrison informed the meeting that due to another commitment she would be unable to attend the training session which was planned to take place after the next scheduled meeting of the SACRE.

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 12th May 2014 are confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3. SACRE Development Plan 2014/15.

Mr Hewitt presented the draft Lancashire SACRE Development Plan for 2013/15 and the members of the SACRE made the following comments in relation to the priorities set out in the Plan.

Priority 1 - To fulfil SACRE's statutory role by providing effective leadership of RE and collective worship.

Mr Hewitt reported that the Agreed Syllabus would continue to be developed through the use of exemplification materials and that links to support materials from different faiths

would be made available to schools via the Religious Education website. It was suggested that where possible teachers should be encouraged to contribute material in order to establish examples of best practice which could then be shared with others.

With regard to monitoring it was reported that it had been over 18 months since a complaint in relation to Religious Education/Collective Worship had been received. Mr Hewitt informed the meeting that the intention was to collate a range of available intelligence, including the Pupil Attitude Questionnaire and responses received from a sample of schools, in order to inform the future monitoring of the quality of provision for RE.

The monitoring of achievement in Religious Education was also discussed and it was noted that the County Council would receive early indications of results nationally in October with more detailed information about local results available at the end of the year.

With regard to the Religious Education Quality Mark it was recognised that there was a cluster of good practice in the North West. It was suggested that some schools used the procedure as a means to audit their practice rather than to achieve the actual Quality Mark. It was agreed that schools should be encouraged to evaluate their Religious Education provision and that information in relation to the Quality Mark be included in the SACRE Annual Report.

Priority 2 – To raise achievement in Religious Education.

It was noted that further work would be undertaken in order to make the Religious Education website more easily accessible and navigable for teachers.

The Religious Education offer from the Burnley Faith Centre would continue to be developed into a pan Lancashire resource. In relation to the Agreed Syllabus it was proposed that an additional bullet point be added to the Development Plan with regard to the development of assessment strategies in the light of national changes.

Priority 3 – To improve the provision of Collective Worship.

The importance of Collective Worship was discussed and it was noted that the issue would be explored at the training session which would be held after the next meeting of the SACRE. The Sub Group recognised that Collective Worship (and Religious Education) could and should play an important role in community cohesion and the promotion of 'British values' and that attention should not simply focus on the results achieved in relation to Religious Education. The importance of providing a curriculum which would be challenging and enable young people to reflect and develop attitudes in relation to their identity was highlighted.

Priority 4 – To ensure that the provision of Religious education is informed by the views of stakeholders.

The Sub Group recognised the importance of the Youth Voice and the contribution which it made to the work of the SACRE in Lancashire. It was noted that a school in Lancashire was involved in the Young Ambassadors programme and that arrangements would be made for representatives to address a future meeting of the SACRE.

Priority 5 – To develop the contribution of Religious Education to Community Cohesion.

Recent events in Birmingham/Rotherham and overseas were discussed and members of the Sub Group recognised the importance of the objectives included in this section of the Development Plan. It was noted that community cohesion would be a key theme in developing training for teachers in order to assist them in tackling inequalities/controversial topics.

The RE Council's Resilience Project was also discussed and it was recognised that whilst the project had finished some time ago the materials were still available and could be beneficial.

Resolved:

1. That the contents of the draft Lancashire SACRE Development Plan for 2013/15 as presented are noted.
 2. That a bullet point be added to the list of activities under Priority 2 with regard to the development of assessment strategies in the light of national changes.
 3. That the Development Plan include a key to identify specific Officers tasked with delivering individual elements of the Plan.
 4. That a link be provided on the Religious Education website to the materials associated with the RE Council Resilience Project.
 5. That where appropriate the Development Plan also include reference to any timescales associated with individual activities.
- 4. Feedback from meeting of SACREs in the northern part of the North West region.**

The Chair informed the meeting that representatives from six local authorities from the northern part of the North West had attended the initial SACRE Hub meeting in July.

Mr Hewitt reported that the Hub had highlighted the variety of ways in which different SACREs operated and provided an opportunity for a valuable and productive discussion around various issues, including resources, the promotion of diversity/community cohesion, the provision of support for teachers and training.

He added that the Hub was considered to represent a valuable resource particularly by smaller authorities and all representatives had agreed to continue to work together to achieve the benefits of joint working. Accordingly the SACRE would be asked to approve the necessary funding for a venue for a further two meetings of the Hub up to March 2015.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

5. Training for SACRE members.

Mr Hewitt reminded members of the Sub Group that the next meeting of the SACRE would be held on the 29th September, 2014 and the intention was for the meeting to be followed

by a training session from 11.30am in relation to supporting SACRE members in visiting schools.

It was reported that the National Association of Teachers of RE had produced guidance regarding visits to schools and Mr Hewitt confirmed that examples of existing guidance had been considered when developing the proposed approach for Lancashire.

Resolved: That the report is noted.

6. Future agenda for SACRE

Resolved: That the following items are presented to the next meeting of the SACRE.

- An update in relation to the SACRE Development Plan 2014/15.
- An update regarding the establishment of the SACRE North West Hub.
- Potential topics for discussion at future meetings of the SACRE North West Hub.

7. National updates.

A report was presented regarding concerns raised by NATRE in relation to the impact of government policy on Religious Education and the fall in GCSE short course entries. In discussing the report the Sub Group noted that nationally there had been a move towards some schools having full course entries which involved only one hour a week being spent on Religious Education. Concern was expressed that the data presented supported the conclusion that changes to the way that school performance was measured had negatively impacted on the provision of Religious Education.

Resolved: That the report is noted.

8. Date of the Next Meeting.

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting would be held at 10am on the 20th October 2014 in Cabinet Room B – The Diamond Jubilee Room at County Hall, Preston.

I Young
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall
Preston