

Lancashire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 16th March, 2015 at 10.00 am in Cabinet Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston

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

The Roman Catholic Church Ms J Busby

The Free Churches Group Mrs A Tidswell
Rev P Clarke
Mr C Wills
Mr P Baker

Teacher Associations Mr P Martin (ASCL) – Chair
Mr D Fann (NAHT)
Ms S Greenhow (NAS/UWT)
Mrs A Robinson (ATL)
Ms J Crabtree (NUT)

Church of England Mrs H Sage
Mr J Wilson

LCC County Councillor A Cheetham
County Councillor K Ellard
Francis Williams

Observers Dr M Craig (Bahá'i Faith)

Co-Optees Mrs K Cooper (LASGB)
Ms J Harris (Teachers in the secondary Sector)

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

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Ben McMullen, Vijayanti Chauhan, Harsha Shukla, Joan O'Rourke, Lisa Fenton, County Councillor P Buckley, County Councillor Y Motala, Jacquie Clarke, Carrie Mercier, Kate Murry and Andrew Brennand.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

3. Monitoring Report on Attainment and the quality of provision in RE

The SACRE were presented with a monitoring report setting out a range of indicators on the quality and impact of religious education in Lancashire.

Members noted that the current report included information on achievement, quality of provision, and pupils' views. It was noted that the performance information was based on voluntary submissions by schools, and that the majority of schools were represented. On attainment, it was reported that the position in Lancashire was improving. It was recognised that a comparison of community schools with other community schools nationally was not possible as that data was not collected nationally.

Whilst the general picture was very positive, there were a few schools at primary and secondary level where fewer than 70% of pupils reached the expected levels at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. It was felt that there may be a number of factors in these cases, for example, the quality of assessment, teacher confidence, or a strong focus on core subjects. It was noted that NATRE were currently undertaking work on assessment for teachers.

On the quality of provision it was noted that, at primary level, there was no clear link between the overall Ofsted judgement and the attainment in RE. However, in the secondary phase, 3 of the 4 schools with attainment below 70% were in an Ofsted category of concern.

The report also presented Ofsted comments on Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural development from all inspections undertaken of community schools from 23 October 2014, as well as pupils' views taken from the Pupil Attitude Questionnaire.

Resolved:

- i. That members seek to gather information from teachers, head teachers and pupils about RE and Collective Worship, in order to gain a greater understanding of the quality of RE provision in Lancashire. These would include:
 - a. Professional development needs
 - b. The effectiveness of support for teaching RE
 - c. The strengths and weaknesses of the Agreed Syllabus
 - d. The strengths and weaknesses of support for Collective Worship
- ii. That in order to sustain and further develop the quality of RE in Lancashire, SACRE:
 - a. Continue to provide a range of support for schools in the teaching of RE which respond to school needs
 - b. Develop approaches to assessment in RE and provide support for schools on assessing RE

- c. Ensure that the revision of the Agreed Syllabus for RE continues to meet the needs of schools and their pupils

4. Progress report on the SACRE Development Plan

It was reported that all of the priorities within the development plan were on track; it was noted that Collective Worship, as set out in Priority 3, continued to be a challenging area. Information for governors would be included in the summer term Governors' Newsletter. Members noted that, with regards to Priority 4, the Youth Voice conference would be taking place next term.

The SACRE discussed the issue of representatives of faith groups working with and visiting schools. It was recognised that this was an area that many schools wished to explore but sometimes experienced difficulties identifying appropriate faith representatives. It was felt that this was an area of opportunity for the faith representatives on SACRE to explore.

Whilst it was agreed that the information held on the SACRE website could be updated, it was made clear that neither the SACRE nor officers would have the capacity or ability to identify or "quality assure" the work of faith representatives.. It was felt that, through giving teachers of RE the confidence and willingness to take ownership, and by supporting them to engage with RE networks, teachers and schools would be able to identify and share best practice in this area.

Resolved: That the Progress report on the SACRE Development Plan be noted.

5. Update on support for RE teaching

A presentation was delivered to the board on support available to RE teachers from a range of national and local bodies.

The presentation provided several links to websites which would prove valuable to teachers of Religious Education, and it was agreed that this information should be on the front page of the SACRE website. .

Resolved:

- i. That the presentation be placed on the front page of the website for easy access.
- ii. That the RE Directory be updated to show information for Lancashire to anyone who uses the website.

6. Report on the NNW Hub meeting

The report of the NNW SACRE Hub was presented to the SACRE.

The SACRE noted and shared concerns that certain parts of the North West area were experiencing renewed difficulties with community cohesion issues,

particularly in relation to the legal right of parents to be able to withdraw their children from RE teaching.

It was reported that schools and head-teachers generally handled these issues well, highlighting the approach taken in the Lancashire syllabus, and by emphasising the overall school ethos. It was reported that a training session was being developed for teachers on "Tackling Controversial Issues", and that this issue will be brought back to SACRE in the future.

7. Letter from the Under Secretary of State for Schools

The board was informed that a letter from Lord Nash was received by all SACREs and reported at the last meeting of the Quality and Standards Sub-Group.

It was noted that, whilst the letter appeared to contain some misunderstandings of the role of SACREs, the principal points made in the letter were positive and significant and demonstrated the renewed interest from central government in the role of RE in supporting the promotion of British values.

Resolved: That a written response be considered for sending to Lord Nash, with the potential of agreeing a face-to-face meeting, after the Election period.

8. Report of the Quality and Standards Sub-group

The report of the Quality and Standards Sub-group was noted.

9. National Update

It was reported that the main issues had been covered elsewhere in the Agenda.

10. Observers' Contributions

Dr M Craig drew the attention of the SACRE to a recent article in "Scientific American" on the value of diversity.

11. Members' News

There was no news reported by members.

12. Correspondence

There was no correspondence reported.

13. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting would be held at 10am on 15 June 2015 in Cabinet Room D – the Henry Bolingbroke room, County Hall, Preston.

Paul Bond
Clerk to the SACRE

County Hall
Preston