

MINUTES

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education Meeting - 17 May 2010

Present: G Devadason, Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal, Sydney Morris, Liz O'Brien, Sam Phillips, Mary Gale, Rosemary Woodward, Dorothy Kirkham, Dave Lyons, Veronica Downes, Ivan Jennings, Frankie Durairatnam and Liz Williams

Apologies for absence: Rummy Bajaj, Christine Chadwick, Lynn Godden, Karen Knobbs, Dr Laow, Bill Walley, Sue Blackmore, Colin Hopkins, Peter Davies, Terry Finn, Liz Staples and Tricia Budd

Also in attendance – Heather Farr and Helen Phillips.

PART ONE

87. Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 March 2010

SACRE were informed that no formal application had been received from the Muslim Community Groups of Burton-on-Trent.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

88. Update on Key Issues

SACRE received an update on key issues that had developed or arisen since their last meeting. The issues raised included:

- i) the Student Council for Religious Education (The minutes of the Student Council meeting held on 29 April 2010 were circulated to SACRE members);
- ii) funding for the Student Council (Budget funding to support the Student Council had been allocated from the Student Study Support, therefore relieving the SACRE budget);
- iii) recruitment and retention (SACRE were updated on a number of recent changes to RE specialist teaching staff in Staffordshire);
- iv) subject focused inspections;
- v) "Meet the Muslims" informal initiative;
- vi) "Meet the Jains" (this event was scheduled for 13 October 2010 and all SACRE members were welcome to attend);
- vii) Offer of the Student Handbook for Religious Education (a Primary School offer of the "Puddles" collection of books and a Sikh book and DVD package were on offer to Staffordshire Secondary Schools. Members were shown slides which gave a taste of the teaching opportunities these two offers would have for Staffordshire RE teachers);
- viii) Primary/secondary monitoring (members were disappointed that there were four secondary schools who had still not responded to the questionnaire);

- ix) the Senior Adviser for RE (this would be a twelve month appointment, and interviews were due to take place on 26 May); and,
- x) approach by Muslims in Burton on Trent.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

89. NASACRE Update

The Chairman gave an oral update on recent NASACRE developments, including:

- a) the interfaith network UK and NASACRE joint seminar. A booklet had been produced highlighting the key points and copies of this had been circulated to SACREs. This document was also available on the web;
- b) NASACRE was helping to organise a celebrating RE month in March 2011;
- c) the NASACRE AGM had been held and Clare Short had been an interesting and inspirational speaker;
- d) consideration was being given to the future structure of SACRE and their way of working with SACREs; and,
- e) a training programme was now available in DVD form for new SACRE members.

RESOLVED – That the oral report be noted.

90. Kenya Visit Feedback

SACRE received a presentation from Mrs Rosemary Woodward on her involvement with Inter-Christian Fellowships Evangelical Mission (IcFEM) and her recent visit to Kenya. The Mission promoted friendship and understanding between schools and celebrated diversity whilst recognising similarities. Those groups of school who were involved in the Mission found it a very enriching experience.

SACRE members thanked Rosemary for her presentation and the insight into such a positive and beneficial programme.

RESOLVED – That the presentation be noted.

91. Support Materials for the Staffordshire Syllabus

Following the introduction of the Agreed Syllabus in 2009 it had been proposed that relevant support materials should be made available on the Local Authority RE web site and SACRE were shown examples of this.

Schools had to evidence how they were taking account of the new syllabus from September 2009 and to support schools in this task examples of long and medium term planning were available on the website.

SACRE congratulated the Senior Advisor on what would be an invaluable tool for teacher in their planning of RE.

RESOLVED – That the range and availability of support materials for schools on the RE web site be noted.

92. Application for Variation of Practice

In order to raise standards and ensure quality of provision at Key Stage 4 the 2009 Agreed Syllabus stated that schools wishing to base their RE provision on an examination specification which was not designated as Religious Studies must take advice from the SACRE. A pro-forma was available on the LA RE website to support schools in any such application for variation.

During the academic year 2008/09 members had been advised of concerns regarding the provision of RE at Clough Hall Technology School, Kidsgrove. The new protocol had been followed with three letters from SACRE being sent to the School requesting information. An application to request variation had now been received and members were invited to consider this application.

Members felt that progress had been made and understood the genuine staffing problems currently experienced by the school.

RESOLVED – That a) the application for variation of practice be supported; and, b) the practice be reviewed in two years.

93. The SACRE Awards 2010 and the SACRE Lecture 2010

Members were informed that the SACRE awards 2009/10 were scheduled for Wednesday 30 June at the Seabridge Centre. Awards would be given in four categories: pupils, teachers, schools/departments and members of the wider County. This year the awards would be an opportunity for the Senior Adviser for RE to recognise those who had been particularly supportive over her twenty year period of office.

The SACRE Lecture was scheduled for Tuesday 21 September 2010 at the Kingston Centre, Stafford. The Lecture would be given by Laurie Rosenberg, Jewish Educational Consultant.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

94. SACRE Development Plan 2009-2010

At its meeting of June 2007 SACRE had agreed to merge the existing Staffordshire action plan with the Ofsted self-evaluation documentation to create a single document addressing the key issues, and that progress against this evaluation be reviewed at SACRE's summer term meeting of each academic year.

SACRE received a copy of the current development plan which highlighted changes to practice and achievements over the year. Members noted the changes and progress made and considered the targets for the forthcoming academic year. Key areas for action in 2010/11 were identified as:

- i) supporting the further development of web-based guidance materials to accompany the 2009 syllabus;
- ii) making greater use of the County's monitoring and progress check initiative to gather information;

- iii) closer monitoring of recruitment in the Authority;
- iv) commissioning work from the Student Council; and,
- v) members' own professional development.

SACRE members were asked to forward any comments on their SACRE Development Plan to the Senior Adviser for RE.

RESOLVED – That any comments on the Development Plan be forwarded to the Senior Adviser for RE.

95. The SACRE Budget 2009-2010

Members received details of the SACRE budget for the financial year 2009/10.

RESOLVED – That the budget report be received.

96. Any Other Business

SACRE were informed of the following items of business:

- a) a consultation process had been undertaken on denominational transport by the County Council. Copies of the consultation were available for members if they wished to take part in this process;
- b) Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal informed SACRE of a new Citizens Panel being established by the Police Authority which intended to act as a consultation body for different faith community groups. Details of the Panel were available from Hifsa for any SACRE member who may be interested in becoming involved;

This would be Heather Farr's last SACRE meeting and she thanked all the members for their support and friendship over the many years she had been involved with SACRE.

Members of SACRE wished to record their appreciation and thanks to Heather for all her enthusiasm, dedication and support of SACRE.

97. Date of next meeting

RESOLVED – That the next SACRE meeting be Wednesday 17 November 2010, 2.00 pm, Kingston Centre, Stafford.

**Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf
Chairman**

Documents referred to in these minutes as Schedules are not appended, but will be attached to the signed copy of the Minutes of the meeting. Copies, or specific information contained in them, may be available on request.