

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
17th November 2010
Report of the Director of Children's Services
Monitoring of Primary School Provision 2009-2010

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present members with an analysis of findings from the monitoring questionnaires for primary schools 2010.
- 1.2 To invite members of SACRE to make comments and/or recommendations in the light of the findings.

2 Summary

- 2.1 In order to provide members with sufficient information to carry out their monitoring duties, schools have, for a number of years, been issued with questionnaires requesting detail about provision. In order to allow schools to engage fully with the review of the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus, monitoring questionnaires were not issued in the academic year 2008-2009.
- 2.2 Collated findings from questionnaires issued to primary schools in the summer term 2010 are attached to this paper. Recommendations are identified.

3 Recommendation

- 3.1 That members of SACRE receive the findings from the 2010 primary questionnaires and consider the recommendations.

4 Background

- 4.1 With a break to allow for consultation on the 2009 Agreed Syllabus, monitoring questionnaires have been circulated to secondary and middle schools for a number of years. From September 2005 these questionnaires have formed the main source of information about the provision for RE in Staffordshire schools.
- 4.2 With a similar break, questionnaires have also been issued to primary schools on a three-year rolling programme since 2006, with approximately 100 schools being contacted for information each year. This activity was suspended for 2008-2009 to allow schools to take part in the agreed syllabus consultation.
- 4.3 Information gathered through the monitoring exercise relating to RE in primary schools, including recommendations is attached below.

5 Equal Opportunities

- 5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

6 Financial implications

- 6.1 Financial implications will be considered in the light of Member's recommendations.

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Religious Education in Staffordshire

Monitoring Primary Provision 2009-2010

Collated responses

Context

Questionnaires were issued to approximately 100 Staffordshire primary schools in the summer term 2010

Returns

34 schools returned the questionnaires. This is a reasonable return in view of the fact that these were issued at a very busy time of the year.

Subject leader

All schools named a subject leader for RE. In a few instances this was identified to be the headteacher.

Time

At Key stage 1 the majority of schools offered between 45 and 60 minutes a week. This meets with the recommendations of the SACRE. 5 schools offered less than this, with one providing as little as 20 minutes on average, but one school gave between 60 and 75 minutes a week. At key stage 2 again the majority of schools provided entitlement RE in 45 to 60 minutes a week. Only one school stated that between 30 and 45 minutes was available. One school did combine the time for RE and collective worship in their return, and this was still below recommendations.

Use of Teaching Assistants (TAs)

Schools were asked about their use of Teaching Assistants to deliver RE. When the initiative to allow TAs to take classes was first introduced concerns were expressed by the SACRE that some schools might delegate all RE lessons to TAs and a letter of guidance was sent to all primary schools. This fear has proved unfounded:

- 15 schools indicated that TAs were not used in RE at all
- 1 school said that TAs work alongside the teacher, and three that TAs sometimes deliver RE
- 1 school made use of a TA to deliver RE in to one year group, one school said that a TA was deployed in key stage 1 and one school said that the use of TAs was significant
- 1 school identified that a HLTA delivered RE in teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time (PPA)

This indicates that the extensive use of TAs which might have been anticipated has not taken place.

Planning

29 schools indicated that their planning was based on Staffordshire guidance. 2 schools identified other sources that made a significant contribution to their planning.

Professional development

17 schools said that their subject leader regularly attended the network meetings offered as part of the County Programme. 3 said a member of staff had attended the conference in 2010, 2 had sent TAs to a session tailored to their needs, 2 had supported teachers to attend 'Creative RE' and 1 subject leader had attended a full day of professional developing on managing RE in the primary school.

Comments

1 school found the training offered through the network meetings invaluable, 1 found the on-line resources helpful, 1 felt that cluster meetings would be helpful. 1 school identified that it needed to begin planning to use the 2009 syllabus while another said their planning was linked to county guidance. In one school responsibility for the subject was under review and in another the use of TAs was seen to make it difficult to monitor standards.

No major issues affecting a number of schools were identified.

Recommendations

No major issues have emerged from the questionnaires.

Opportunities should be found to remind schools of the recommended time allocation at both key stages, although this is only an issue in a minority of schools.

Some schools may also need to be reminded that time set aside for collective worship cannot be counted as religious education.