

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
18th November 2020
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and
Communities
Report on the Westhill Project Legacy

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To present SACRE members with an update on the Westhill Project Legacy

2 Summary

2.1 Follow up on the Explore-Engage-Reflect Westhill legacy project. This report shows how this work now continues to support learners in Staffordshire with difference and diversity through the exploration of Christianity and Islam

3 Recommendation

That members of SACRE receive the reports

4 Background

4.1 During the year 2017-2018 SACRE received a grant from Westhill/NASACRE to launch the new Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for RE through a conference entitled Explore-Engage-Reflect. SACRE was successful in carrying forward the grant into 2018-19 and 2019-20. Youth Net in conjunction with the Entrust Minority Ethnic Achievement Service (MEAS) team continue to take this forward and are providing support and resources and workshops on Christianity and Islam, for those schools who choose throughout Staffordshire. Mary Gale continues to monitor the use of the grant and broker the support.

7 Equal Opportunities

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

8 Financial implications

8.1 Financial implications that need to be considered are whether SACRE is willing to provide further funds from its budget to support the project into the Spring 2021 term so that Staffordshire learners receive the opportunity to take part in this project. There are three schools awaiting confirmation. Costs that need to be covered include the input from the Entrust MEAS team to support the learning on Islam. This in turn keeps the costs down for Youth Net and therefore the costs for schools.

Contact Officer: **Mary Gale 07816374873**

Explore, Engage, Reflect Westhill Legacy Project

Background

During the year 2017-2018 SACRE received an award grant from Westhill/NASACRE to support the implementation of the new Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for RE through a conference entitled "Explore, Engage Reflect". This continued into 2019-20

Youth Net in conjunction with the Entrust MEAS team have taken this forward and are providing support through resources and workshops on Christianity and Islam, for those schools who choose throughout Staffordshire. This enables learners to encounter diversity at first hand.

Report

Schools continue to receive an invitation letter to take part in the project. There is a choice of morning or afternoon sessions. The sessions in 2020 were run at Rising Brook Baptist Church Stafford ST17 9LT on Wednesday 22nd January from 9.30-12 noon and 1-3pm. Members of the SACRE were invited to attend and support.

The schools involved in the project were Burton Manor Primary Year 5/ 6 with 87 pupils, St Paul's CE VC Primary, year 5/6 with 42 pupils and Veritas Primary with 30 pupils.

This project has been further extended into the Burton-upon-Trent area in line with SACRE request. The Burton dates include 5th and 12th February 2020, the hosts are Victoria Community and Tower View Primary with River View and Shobnall Primary attending.

The project offers an inspirational face to faith experience for pupils run by a team of education consultants who are also adherents of Christianity or Islam thus enabling pupils to learn together about issues regarding faith, diversity and what it means to live out beliefs today, in dynamic and exciting ways. It also acts as an exceptional CPD opportunity for the staff and volunteers attending as throughout the day, they were given an opportunity to increase their own subject knowledge, and how to use the methods of 'Explore, Engage, Reflect' to enhance learning back in their schools in line with Agreed Syllabus.

Pupils are given the opportunity:

- To learn about faith and beliefs through **exploring** artefacts, images and text
- To think for themselves, **engaging** with key questions relevant to the people of faith they will meet
- To think deeply and creatively about the value of faith **reflecting** on what it means for people to live a faith within England through a real opportunity for dialogue.

The learning methods are creative and focused on thinking about the values, traditions and lives of modern Christians and Muslims in England today.

The children experience both Christian and Islam exhibitions enhanced with additional hands on activity related learning.

After speaking to staff and pupils at the start of the project, it is apparent that their knowledge about Christians and Muslims is confused. However, at the end of the project input staff and pupils stated that they now understood much more, and their knowledge base had increased. This knowledge needs to be consolidated once back at school.

Mary Gale Adviser to SACRE