

MINUTES

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education Meeting - 13 May 2009

Present: Rummy Bajaj, Pat Budd, Christine Chadwick, Davies, P.R., Drinkwater, E.N., Frankie Durairatnam, Finn, T.V., Mary Gale, Lynn Godden, Colin Hopkins, Janet Kemp, Karen Knobbs, Dave Lyons, Michael Metcalf, Sam Phillips and Bill Walley

Apologies for absence: Blackmore, Veronica Downes, Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal, Sydney Morris, Muhammad Parekh, Wilkins, A.J. and Rosemary Woodward

Also in attendance – Heather Farr, Senior Advisor for Religious Education; Helen Phillips

PART ONE

52. Apologies

53. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2009

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2009 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

54. Update on Key Issues

(Schedule 1)

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

- i) frequency of subject inspections (Members received a copy of the letter sent to Mr A. Brine, HMI with responsibility for RE, and his letter of response);
- ii) subject inspection report for Endon High School (SACRE asked that a letter of congratulations be sent to the School);
- iii) the Student Council;
- iv) Staffordshire SACRE web page;
- v) Monitoring of provision;
- vi) The SACRE awards (the Awards were scheduled for 2 July and all SACRE members were welcome to attend); and
- vii) Persona dolls.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

55. NASACRE Update

The Chairman gave an oral report updating members on the key issues raised by the National Association of SACRE's (NASACRE), including: NASACRE Annual meeting; consultation on draft guidance for RE; and, the Interfaith Network.

RESOLVED – That the oral report be noted.

56. The Agreed Syllabus Review

(Schedule 2)

At their meeting of 17 June 2008 SACRE had convened an Agreed Syllabus Conference and had set in motion the Agreed Syllabus Review for Staffordshire. Members had considered the progress made at subsequent meetings.

Members received details of the action taken following comments and recommendations made by SACRE. Specifically members were informed that:

- a) The Early Years Adviser had been consulted and it had been decided to leave the sections on Early Years Foundation Stage and Reception/Key Stage 1 as they were in the statutory section of the syllabus to reflect the legal position of RE in these phases. Full account would be taken of SACRE's comments in the guidance material where careful attention would be paid to addressing the specific needs of each area.
- b) It was not a requirement for special schools to follow the locally agreed syllabus and therefore it was not appropriate to include guidance in the statutory section of the syllabus for this sector. For teachers of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in other schools an information box had been added to the section **“How can pupils and teachers recognise progress in religious education?”** referring them to the guidance material which would include planning information and the ‘P’ (performance) scale for RE, a set of descriptions for recording the achievement of pupils with SEN. This was in keeping with the way in which requirements were presented for other subject areas by QCA.
- c) The text had been amended as appropriate to include full reference to conceptual and experiential faiths.

The draft syllabus had been circulated to all subject leaders in secondary and middle schools, to primary subject leaders on the county database and to SACRE members. All responses received had been taken into account and members considered the amended syllabus.

SACRE discussed the amended syllabus in detail. In particular discussion centred on the section outlining Key Stage 4 Programmes of Learning and whether it was appropriate to alter some of the wording to allow greater flexibility without compromising the standards.

After a considered debate SACRE agreed the following amendments to the Key Stage 4 section, to now read:

“At Key Stage 4 all pupils should follow, as a basis, an accredited specification (from a recognised examination board) in Religious Studies. Schools should provide reasonable time for pupils to complete this, and if appropriate, to attain an external qualification.

Schools wishing to base a Religious Studies programme on any other accredited specification, for example Humanities or Citizenship, must take advice from SACRE.

In keeping with the aim of religious education and the underlying principles of the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus pupils must have the opportunity to study Christianity and to draw examples from at least one other faith.

The decision to enter pupils for an examination at the end of the course is at schools’ discretion.”

A further amendment was agreed within the Legal Framework page to move the table showing hours of study per year for each key stage from the “statutory requirement” section to the “strongly recommended” (though not a legal requirement) section.

It was intended that, once the Syllabus had been agreed, it would be launched on the evening of the SACRE lecture, on Tuesday 22 September 2009.

RESOLVED – That: a) the report be received;
b) the new Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus, with the inclusion of the amendments listed above, be approved for consideration by the Agreed Syllabus Conference; and,
c) outline arrangements for the launch of the new syllabus be agreed.

57. Agreeing the Staffordshire Syllabus: The Agreed Syllabus Conference

(Schedule 3)

The SACRE’s is required by law to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference to enable the any new syllabus for Religious Education to be formally agreed.

The Chairman convened an Agreed Syllabus Conference. Each Committee formally considered the amended Syllabus, as approved by SACRE for their consideration.

The four Committees were unanimous in agreeing the new Syllabus.

RESOLVED – That the Agreed Syllabus for Staffordshire 2009 be approved.

58. Professional Development Opportunities for SACRE Members

(Schedule 4)

SACRE was presented with a draft copy of the Professional Development Programme available to teachers of RE in Staffordshire for 2009-10. SACRE members were invited to attend any of the events, with prior notice given to the Senior Advisor for RE.

Previously members had discussed the possibility of an activity focusing on SACRE's professional development. It had been suggested that this be arranged during an extended meeting to be held in the autumn term. Key Stage 4 RE was suggested as the topic for the development session.

RESOLVED – That, a) the draft professional development programme be noted; and b) the autumn term professional development session for SACRE be based around Key Stage 4 RE.

59. National Inter Faith Week 15 - 21 November 2009

(Schedule 5)

The Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom and the Department for Communities and Local Government was facilitating a one off Inter Faith Week in 2009.

The event was designed to:

- strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels;
- encourage local faith groups and communities to reach out to each other and build stronger bonds of understanding and cooperation;
- increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, with a particular focus on the contribution their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society;
- to gain positive profile for inter faith initiatives, locally, regionally and nationally as well as for the overall work of building good inter faith relations;
- increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs;
- encourage the development of new partnerships within local communities and by faith communities with statutory and third sector partners.

SACREs and other organisations were being invited to consider ways to highlight the importance of inter faith understanding and co-operation. Information on this would be circulated to schools.

RESOLVED – That the report be received.

60. SACRE Development Plan

(Schedule 6)

At their meeting of 25 June 2007 SACRE agreed to merge the existing Staffordshire action plan with the Ofsted self-evaluation documentation to create a single document addressing the key issues. It was proposed that progress against the self-evaluation document be reviewed by SACRE annually at their summer term meeting, with targets agreed for the forthcoming academic year.

Members received copies of the development plan for 2008-09 and considered targets for 2009-10.

RESOLVED – That the report be received.

61. The SACRE Budget 2009 - 2010

(Schedule 7)

Members received a breakdown of the SACRE budget for the financial year 2009-10.

Continuing priorities for the year 2009-10 were: support for the Student Council; development of guidance materials to accompany the 2009 Agreed Syllabus; the sixth form conference; the SACRE awards 2010; and, the SACRE lecture.

RESOLVED – That the report be received.

62. Any Other Business

- a) Protocols – a copy of proposed protocols to help SACRE carry out its statutory duty to monitor the provision of religious education was circulated to members for their consideration. Members were asked to consider this and forward any observations to the Senior Advisor for RE.
- b) Chasetown Specialist Sports College – SACRE were informed of current difficulties in offering the short course RE at Key Stage 4 and the temporary measures taken to overcome these problems in the short term. (Mr T.V. Finn and Mr E.R. Drinkwater declared an interest in this item.)

63. Date of next meeting

RESOLVED – RESOLVED – That the next meeting of SACRE is scheduled for Wednesday 18 November 2009, 2.00 pm, Kingston Centre, Stafford. This would include an optional professional development activity for members, subject to confirmation.

**Michael Metcalfe
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.