

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
4th March 2010
Report of the Corporate Director (Children, Young People and Families)
An Update on Key Issues

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To present members of SACRE with a brief update on key issues that have developed or arisen since the last meeting of SACRE.

2 Summary

2.1 Members of SACRE will receive a brief report on a number of key issues. These are matters which have either been raised at previous SACRE meetings and which have moved forward, or matters on which it is appropriate to brief members of SACRE.

3 Recommendation

3.1 That members of SACRE receive the report and note the contents

4 Background

4.1 Since the autumn term meeting of the SACRE there have been developments in a number of areas which had previously been agenda items for SACRE or which have local or national importance for RE.

4.2 Members will be briefed on these key developments. A summary is attached to this paper.

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 may be raised by individual items. These have been dealt with elsewhere, or will be raised at future meetings of SACRE.

Contact Officer
Telephone number:

Heather Farr
01785 277997

The Student Council for Religious Education



The autumn term meeting of the Student Council was held on November 20th 2009 when a new cohort of Year 12 students was welcomed on board. Proceedings began with refreshments at 10.00 a.m. when new Councillors were introduced to the long standing tradition - the eating of flapjack in large quantities. During the morning, existing members worked on Council tasks while new Councillors learned about RE in Staffordshire, the work of the SACRE and the role of the Student Council. Lunch was, as always, a popular highlight of the day. Those present built good working relationships although sadly a significant proportion of Year 13 members were unable to attend, including the Chair and Vice-chair. Stepping in at the last moment, Lauren Cartwright took over the role of chair with style, and steered the meeting through a long agenda. She made all feel welcome and moved efficiently through the business of the day. Some good discussion took place which will be helpful in the development of the new Agreed Syllabus. Minutes are attached. Many thanks to Michael Metcalf for his continuing support of the Council.

The next meeting of the Council will take place on March 5th 2010 when the guest speaker will be Alan Foster, SID officer and practising Mormon. All SACRE members are welcome to attend the meeting which starts at 10.00 a.m. at the Seabridge Centre.

Offers: Student Handbook for Religious Education

Teachers continue to be offered quality resources at reduced rates made possible through bulk buying by the LA. In the autumn term a hundred copies of the SHAP calendar were sold and in the late autumn term 550 copies of 'Stories to Remember' were ordered by schools at a significant discount. For the spring term, schools have again been offered the excellent reference book 'The Student Handbook for Religious Education' which gives a brief, factual account of the six major faiths. 150 copies were sold out almost immediately, and a further 150 have been placed on order. These books are popular in primary schools where they provide non-specialist teachers with a starting point for their own knowledge.

Professional development opportunities for RE

Since the autumn term meeting teachers have been offered a number of professional development opportunities. These have included a range of network meetings, sessions for new subject leaders and NQTs in primary schools and a day's activity for Early Years practitioners working with Consultant Gill Vaisey. Lat Blaylock, editor of RE Today, returned to Stafford to lead a successful conference in February.

Two new initiatives added to the programme are an A level clinic in May and 'Meet the Muslims', an informal question and answer session to be held at 4.00 p.m. at the Kingston Centre on Thursday 11th March. Members of SACRE are welcome to attend.

Support for the 2009 Staffordshire Syllabus

There have been no complaints about the new Staffordshire syllabus – and no particular acclaim! This would seem to indicate that schools have received the document and are beginning to work with it. Teachers have been informed that there should be evidence to show that planning takes account of the new syllabus by September 2010.

The Staffordshire website <http://education.staffordshire.gov.uk/re> is being used as the medium through which to share support materials and a wide range of long term plans are now available for schools to consider, use or adapt. Medium term planning will follow shortly.

Minutes of the Staffordshire Student Council for Religious Education

Date	20 th November 2009
Time	1.45-4.00pm
Location	Seabridge Centre

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes and matters arising
3. Welcome to new members
4. A report on the morning's activities
5. An update on events since the last meeting
6. Tell SACRE
7. Future projects

Dates of future meetings:

5 th March 2010	Council Meeting
29 th April 2010	Council Meeting
17 th June 2010	Council Meeting
30 th June 2010	SACRE Awards

2 Minutes and matters arising

Apologies were taken and the register taken for councillors present.
Minutes of meeting 18th June 2009 seen and accepted.

3. Welcome to new members

The officials of the meeting were introduced: Lauren Cartwright was acting Chair in Hannah Goodwin's place, with Emma Taylor and Katie Haywood supporting her in place of Harriet Jackson. Lizz Wilkins was secretary.

Lauren gave a short explanation of SSSCRE and what the council does.

The Terms of Reference for new councillors were looked over, and the expectations of them were clarified; for instance giving apologies if unable to attend a meeting, and wearing their black T-shirts.

Heather opened a discussion about communication between SSSCRE members. Heather took new member's e-mail addresses. Admin of the Facebook page has been taken over by Daniel Grubb. It was reminded that apologies need a week's notice wherever possible, for reasons of cost and waste.

The councillors discussed and ideas were shared. It was agreed that it was compulsory for any e-mail sent by Heather to be replied to. Each school appointed a School Rep, who will have the mobile numbers of each member in their school, and the numbers of the other reps. School reps were chosen as Jonathan Ackroyd, Emma Taylor, Lauren Quincey, Rebekkah Hales, Scarlett Dixon and Katie Haywood.

4. A report on the morning's activities

Each member introduced him/herself with their name, school and subjects.

Lower sixth members reported on their morning: they had received their T-shirts and folders and learnt about what SSSCRE does. They had done a memory exercise and post-it note game as teambuilding activities. The morning had been enjoyed overall, especially the food!

Upper sixth members also reported on the three tasks they had been given. They had made a list of the top ten things that RE in schools is useful for. This list was shared, the council got into groups of three or four people to discuss it. The list was commented on and slightly altered, for Heather to circulate with the changes later.

Upper sixth had also designed a leaflet about taking RE as a GCSE subject, which was then to be produced on computer and circulated for comments.

Existing members had discussed how meetings could be altered to reduce the number of people not able to attend, and had suggested changing the meetings to be held in the morning, possibly from 10:00 to 2:15

5 An update on events since the last meeting

Heather spoke about the SACRE Awards, and stated that the SSCRE team had made a great contribution. A council visit to the National Arboretum had taken place with members of Year 13 (2007-2009) attending.

Former councillors were mentioned, and information was shared on their places at University or re-sitting A-Levels.

It was asked how the new members had found out about SSCRE, and reported that they had all learned of it through their RE teachers.

Heather also briefly told the council about the last SACRE meeting.

6 Tell SACRE

Michael talked to the council about what SACRE is, and the history of Religious Education in schools. He explained that it was decided that the Christian faith should be taught alongside other faiths, and to ensure this, every Local Authority has had a SACRE since at least 1988 if not before. Every SACRE has on it four committees: the Church of England, other denominations and faiths, teachers associations, and the LA. For decision making, each committee gets one vote, but they work well together and usually make similar decisions.

It was told what SACRE does, much "official business", and the annual report.

The date of the next SACRE meeting was shared, and an open invitation extended to the council to attend it.

Heather opened a discussion about what questions the councillors would like to be asked in RE lessons.

These were possible titles for RE topics, and the councillors talked in small groups and then reported back for Heather to write them down.

7. Future projects

Lauren raised the issue of this year's charity project. It was agreed that this should be in aid of St Giles' Hospice, and to be completed by the March meeting.

It was agreed that each school is to do assemblies and an event, the most popular idea being a Sixth Form pyjama day with a recommended fee of £1 each.

Absent Year 13s must be contacted, as it is for the Y13s to organise along with the school reps.

Heather asked what speakers the council would like to hear from at future meetings. Councillors liked the suggestion of a Mormon, and were asked to come loaded with questions to ask him during the morning.

Also Frankie the Baha'i was a popular choice, and Jewish speakers possibly for the April meeting. Other suggestions included a Scientologist and a Jedi. Michael offered a trivia quiz on Christianity also.

A trip to somewhere was mentioned, to be discussed at a future meeting.