

MINUTES of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Monday 15 March 2010 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor J Stone (Chairman)

Councillor WU Attfield, Mrs C Ault, Mrs L Barker, Revd. P. Barlow, Mr. P. Bowen, Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins, Mrs A Daniel, Ms T Gregory, Councillor Brig P Jones CBE, Mrs G Jutle, Ms. K. Mayglothing, Mrs S McCamley, Sr. D. O'Donnell and Mr Z Pandor

In attendance: Councillor WLS Bowen (Chairman - Children's Services Scrutiny Committee)

26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mrs J Brown, Mr T Leach and Ms C Wolfe.

The Democratic Services Officer reported that Mrs J Brown had resigned from SACRE for personal reasons. SACRE thanked Mrs Brown for her valued contribution to Religious Education in the County and to the work of SACRE and wished her well for the future.

The Chairman reported that Mrs Bridget Knight, former Lead Officer to SACRE, had taken up a secondment post with QCDA. The Chairman welcomed Mrs Vicky Ward, General Inspector who would be the Interim Lead Officer.

27. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Ms T Gregory substituted for Mr T Leach.

28. MINUTES

The Democratic Services Officer requested that in Minute 24 the words 'County Cohesion Inspector' be deleted and substituted by 'Schools Improvement Inspector'.

RESOLVED: That subject to making the above change the minutes of the meeting held 1 December 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

29. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No written questions were received.

30. SACRE BUDGET

SACRE were informed of its budget position.

The Chairman and the Interim Lead Officer (Vicky Ward, General Inspector) informed SACRE that the base budget figure for 2009/10 would be reflected in the 2010/11 budget. However, it had been acknowledged by the Local Authority that this figure did not take account of the additional work needed in producing the Agreed Syllabus, being undertaken by the Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus Conference. The Interim Lead Officer reported that

while Local Authority budgets were facing pressures, limited finance would be found in 2010/11 to enable the work to continue on producing a revised Agreed Syllabus. Expenditure incurred in publishing the Syllabus and training for teachers would fall in the 2011/12 financial year and therefore there was time to make appropriate budgetary arrangements.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

31. 2010 SACRE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

SACRE considered whether to host a 2010 SACRE Annual Conference.

The Consultant for RE (Mrs J Mackley) reported that in the interests of continuing the Conference she had consulted her colleagues at RE Today who had generously agreed to run workshops at the Conference. She had prepared a proposed programme for consideration working on the theme; Better RE: Developing cohesion, thinking and linking. In view of earlier discussion regarding budgets she highlighted that while the Annual Conference sought to be self financing, there was an element of financial risk concerning covering the cost of hiring a venue and this would have to be underwritten by the Local Authority. A degree of administrative work would also need to be undertaken.

SACRE thanked the Consultant for RE (J Mackley) and her colleagues for their offer and noting the intention to hold the Conference at Belmont, it was suggested that either buildings at the old Minster College, Leominster or The Palace, Hereford could be considered as possible alternative venues.

Comment was made that last years 'pay for one delegate and get one place free' initiative seemed to have worked well and this could be considered again for this year. A suggestion was made that places could also be open to delegates from neighbouring Counties.

Of the two suggested dates for holding the Conference (23rd or 30th September) Members favoured the 30th September.

The Interim Lead Officer strongly emphasised that the Conference had to be self financing and that information would have to be sent to schools earlier than in previous years. This was so that actual attendance numbers could be ascertained by the end of June and a decision made on whether it was viable to run the Conference.

RESOLVED: that

- a. the Interim Lead Officer be requested to put in place arrangements for a 2010 SACRE Annual Conference based on the proposed programme now considered; and**
- b. when confirmed attendance numbers were known and following consultation with the Chairman the Interim Lead Officer be authorised to consider the viability of running the Conference.**

32. RE IN THE PRIMARY CURRICULUM

SACRE noted the publication of 'RE in the Primary Curriculum' which included the RE Programme of Learning.

The Democratic Services Officer reported that following consultation during summer 2009 the QCDA had recently published 'RE in the Primary Curriculum' which included the RE Programme of Learning. He also reported that the February 'Update' from

QCDA indicated that further guidance on implementing the new primary curriculum would be issued on 29 March 2010.

The Consultant for RE (JM) reported that many of the issues raised by SACRE when it had considered and responded to the draft had not been incorporated into the final version. She considered that the statement 'A statutory subject supported by a non-statutory programme of learning' would still be confusing for practitioners. It was suggested that a letter be sent to all primary schools clearly setting out Religious Educations' position in the school curriculum. She acknowledged that the final document now gave more prominence to RE in that it was identifiable under its own section tab.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and a letter be sent to all primary schools clearly setting out Religious Educations' position in the school curriculum.

33. RE NON-STATUTORY GUIDANCE 2010

SACRE noted the publication of 'Religious education in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010'.

The Democratic Services Officer reported that following consultation during summer 2009 the DCSF had now published its 'Religious education in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010'. Copies of the publication had previously been issued to Members and were available to download from www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications (ref DCSF-00114-2010). He reported that the guidance replaced the RE elements of Circular 1/94 and it was understood that the Collective Worship elements would be revised in due course. The new guidance provided an indication of the wide range of work SACRE could undertake if it had the resources. No change had been made to the legal standing of either SACRE or the Agreed Syllabus Conference.

SACRE noted that the guidance was also intended for governors, headteachers, curriculum planners and teachers as it also provided a background to RE in the curriculum.

RESOLVED: That the guidance be noted.

34. NEWS FROM NASACRE

SACRE noted details of the 2010 NASACRE Annual Conference and that March 2011 will mark the national month of celebration for RE.

The Consultant for RE (Mrs J Mackley) also informed SACRE that the QCDA would be holding a conference on 24 March in London on 'RE in the Primary Curriculum'. While this was a free conference travel expenses would need to be considered.

While both conferences were of interest to SACRE, particularly the one organised by the QCDA, SACRE noted the budget position. It was hoped that reports of the conferences could be obtained in due course.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

35. FUTURE MEETING DATES

SACRE noted the future meeting dates.

36. MRS J MACKLEY - RE CONSULTANT

The Chairman reported that Mrs Joyce Mackley, Religious Education Consultant, would be retiring at the end of March 2010. Mrs Mackley had been the RE Consultant to SACRE since 1st October 1998, and on behalf of SACRE the Chairman thanked her for her valued advice and support to SACRE over the years. He also acknowledged her involvement in establishing the Multi-faith Conferences.

The Chairman also thanked Mrs Mackley for her advice to the Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus Conference, and in particular her work in drafting the RE Syllabuses, which had made a major contribution to the teaching of Religious Education in the County.

The Chairman presented Mrs Mackley with a bouquet of flowers, retirement gift and a card signed by the Members in attendance and wished her a long and happy retirement.

The meeting ended at 2.35 pm

CHAIRMAN