

MINUTES of the meeting of Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus Conference held at Council Chamber, Brockington on Monday 15 March 2010 at 2.30 pm

Present: Councillor J Stone (Chairman)

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

In attendance: Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins, Mrs A Daniel and Ms. K. Mayglothling

22. 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 the Agreed Syllabus Conference for personal reasons. The Conference thanked Mrs Brown for her valued contribution to Religious Education in the County and to the work of the Conference and wished her well for the future.

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

23. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Ms T Gregory substituted for Mr T Leach.

24. MINUTES

In relation to Minute 20 it was clarified that arrangements were in hand to appoint Mr S Pett as Consultant for RE to replace Mrs J Mackley.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held 1 December 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

25. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No written questions were received.

26. AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE - BUDGET POSITION

The Syllabus Conference were informed of the budget position to undertake its work.

Herefordshire SACRE, held immediately prior to this meeting, were informed of the budget position for SACRE and the Agreed Syllabus Conference and the minute of that meeting is set out below for convenience:

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.

The Syllabus Conference noted the position.

27. CONSIDERATION OF INITIAL DRAFTING WORK

The Conference considered the initial drafting work undertaken by the Consultant for RE as part of the review of the Agreed Syllabus.

The Consultant for RE (Stephen Pett) circulated a paper, a copy of which has been placed in the minute book, setting out a number of areas the Conference needed to consider that would guide the drafting of the new syllabus. Based on the principles agreed at the December 2009 meeting the paper set out: four 'options' for the extent of the review; a possible 'progression grid' with comments on it; how the changes related to the current syllabus; a possible model for option 3; sample pages using option 3; and an example planning grid for Key Stage 1.

During the course of debate the following principal points were noted:

- Having considered the four options, option three was favoured both by the Consultant and the Conference. This would build on the current syllabus, updating it for the next five years without substantial change. It would also allow for a slimmer, more usable document to be produced incorporating guidance on planning. It was acknowledged that this would be more expensive than option four, however, it could be produced as a Word document and converted to PDF for online access.
- The EML progression grid was a feature of the new primary curriculum RE programme of Learning (PoL) with Early-Middle-Late (EML) progression statements. Initially the Consultants thought there would be a great advantage in the new Syllabus containing such a page. However, on working with the page the Consultant (SP) had experienced difficulty with the EML Grid in that the official PoL was very limited, with a real imbalance between learning about and learning from, and the many statements that could be covered in PSHE or citizenship without any reference to religion and belief. The PoL format had been devised for other curriculum areas and the RE PoL had been 'squeezed' to fit. Other areas of difficulty were described in the paper.
- Option three was favoured as it offered more of a guide for teachers. Questioned whether a link could also be made to values education the Consultant (SP) undertook to look at including skills evaluation areas.
- Subject to resources, the intention was to consult with a group of teachers on the development of the content and to pilot certain parts before compiling the final version. Views were expressed that teachers, including non-specialist teachers, needed to be involved so that they had a sense of ownership and ensure that the Syllabus was deliverable. Working with teachers in cluster groups or via network groups was suggested.
- How the final Agreed Syllabus was to be presented (paper/ CD/web site) would be looked into. While this element, together with the launch, would be in the next financial year it was felt that advance planning was needed, particularly as this may have an impact on how the syllabus was initially drafted in digital form.

- Responding to a suggestion that the Annual Conference could be used to undertake the desired consultation, it was felt that the timing of this would be too late and paying delegates would expect more from the event.

RESOLVED: that

1. the comments and suggestions made in the Consultant for RE paper submitted to the meeting be agreed;
2. that option three in the paper (use the current Agreed Syllabus but re-write and slim down) be approved;
3. following consultation with the Interim Lead Officer regarding the use of resources, the Consultant for RE be authorised to undertake any necessary consultation with teachers and any other associated work to progress the drafting work; and
4. a further report on the drafting of the new Agreed Syllabus be reported to the July 2010 meeting.

28. FURTHER WORK TO PROGRESS THE SYLLABUS REVIEW

No further issues to progress the Syllabus Review were noted at this time.

29. FUTURE MEETING DATES

The Conference noted the future meeting dates.

The meeting ended at 3.50 pm

CHAIRMAN