

**MINUTES of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Monday 19 March 2012 at 2.00 pm**

**Present:** Councillor J Stone (Chairman)

Councillor CNH Attwood, Revd. P. Barlow, Mrs S Bryant, Councillor EMK Chave, Venerable Tsultrim Tenzin Choesang, Miss E James, Mrs G Jutle, Ms. K. Mayglothling, Rev DT Meachem, Miss A Taylor and Ms C Wolfe

**Officers:** Mrs W Boulter, Lead Officer for SACRE; Mr S Pett, Consultant to SACRE; P James, Democratic Services Officer.

**93. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from: Mrs A Ault; Mrs L Baker; Mrs A Daniel; Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins.

**94. NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

None.

**95. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held 21 November 2011 were approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

**96. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No written questions had been received.

**97. SURVEY INTO RE IN HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS**

SACRE considered the results from a survey into the provision of RE in Herefordshire Schools.

The Lead Officer for SACRE reported that an electronic survey had been undertaken. Schools had been broken down by primary, secondary and special school sector and a reasonable response had been received.

The Consultant for RE circulated at the meeting a revised report containing updated data for primary and secondary schools and the results from the Special Schools.

He commented that:

- The response rate had been encouraging. It was difficult to generalise about the results but the results would provide a good benchmark for future surveys.
- A range of comments had been made and a sample were included in the report.
- The majority of RE in primary schools was delivered through discrete lessons and was mostly taught by the class teacher. A high proportion of respondents feel

'extremely confident' or 'confident' about implementing the new agreed syllabus. The majority of schools had fully or partially implemented the revised agreed syllabus.

- There were a variety of delivery methods within the secondary sector. So far locally there was no discernible impact from the government's decision concerning RE not being part of the E-Baccalaureate. A variety of examination or non-examination courses were offered.
- 100% of special schools had responded. A variety of delivery methods were employed. A range of requests were made concerning lesson planning and the practicalities of teaching RE in a special schools environment.

SACRE noted that the statistics had not included 6<sup>th</sup> Form provision, however, RE was delivered through theology subjects.

The survey questions were made available to the meeting and the Lead Officer suggested that a similar survey be undertaken next year as that would start to build up a data set that would enable any local trend to be identified.

Responding to various questions concerning the level of RE delivered or RE related qualifications held by teachers, indicated by the report, the Lead Officer reported that no direct comparison could be made with other local authorities but from her experience Herefordshire was not that different to other authorities. It was not that unusual, particularly in primary schools, for the subject to be taught by a non-specialist teacher.

In relation to comments requesting additional RE resources, SACRE would support this whenever it was able to do so.

**RESOLVED: That**

- a) The Chairman write to all schools thanking them for completing the survey;**
- b) That the survey results be forwarded to all school for information;**
- c) The survey be repeated next year**
- d) SACRE would support the provision of RE resources whenever it is able to do so.**

**98. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

SACRE considered national developments in RE.

The Consultant for RE presented his report, which covered a number of national developments in Religious Education and particularly highlighted:

- Nationally there were reports of some adverse effect in schools from the governments E.Bac decision. The DfE had reiterated the compulsory nature of RE both privately to teachers and publicly
- Arising out of the national concerns regarding the E.Bac an all-party parliamentary group for RE had been formed to provide a 'medium through which MPs and peers could discuss the current provision of religious education and to advocate for the highest standards of RE teaching'.
- Academies are independently funded state schools, outside the remit of the local authority and therefore SACRE. All academies are required to teach RE but this may be in accordance with their funding agreement. In effect some academies may need to produce their own RE syllabus.
- While Ofsted do not inspect for compliance they do have to assess whether schools are delivering a 'broad and balanced curriculum'.
- As academies become more established in the county SACRE may need to devise ways that their presence is incorporated into SACRE. It was noted that one of the current co-opted members was from an academy.

While academies did not come within SACREs remit SACRE hoped that academies would see the benefit of teaching according to the Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus.

Responding to whether Collective Worship was included in academy funding agreements the Lead Officer responded that in newer agreement it may be included in some form. The practice of holding Collective Worship had not been consistent around the country for some time – particularly in high schools. SACRE encouraged all schools, including academies and free schools, to include Collective Worship in the schools programme.

It was suggested that a question about the provision of collective worship be included in next year's survey.

It was also suggested that Stephen Lloyd MP and chair of the all-party parliamentary group for RE be considered as the key note speaker at next year's SACRE Conference. He could be supported by a range of other faiths.

**RESOLVED: That the national developments be noted and a question on collective worship be included in next year's survey.**

#### **99. SACRE CONFERENCE 2012 - UPDATE**

SACRE received an update on arrangements for the SACRE 2012 Conference.

The Consultant for RE reported that subject to achieving the financial breakeven numbers (45 paying delegates) the SACRE 2012 Conference would be held on 26 June at the Hereford Academy. The speaker would be Alan Brine HMI at Ofsted and Lat Blaylock, RE Today. Six workshop sessions were planned and free teaching resource packs would be issued to county schools. A sample programme and booking form was circulated.

The Lead Officer emphasised that while there may be a little leeway the Conference had to financially break even and therefore schools (Heads and subject leaders) would be notified by letter and information would be available via the CPD website. If delegate number were low she would liaise with the Chairman over whether to continue.

It was suggested that the diocesan offices be informed together with schools in the independent sector.

SACRE members may be invited to attend the Conference once the financial breakeven had been achieved and members were requested to notify either the Lead Officer or the Democratic Services Officer if they wished to attend.

**RESOLVED: that the position set out by the Consultant for RE and the Lead Officer be noted.**

#### **100. PROPOSED TRAINING ON THE AGREED SYLLABUS FOR RE FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS**

Consideration was given to supporting a training day on the implementation of the revised Agreed Syllabus for RE 2011-16 being specifically targeted at Special Schools.

The Consultant for RE reported that Gloucestershire SACRE were organising a one day course targeted at supporting Special Schools with the implementation of the revised Syllabus for RE 2011-16. As the syllabus was very similar to the Herefordshire syllabus it was suggested that a joint day be organised and sponsored by Herefordshire and Gloucestershire SACREs.

He circulated an outline for the event being held at Puckrup Hall, Tewkesbury with Anne Krisman, subject leader at Little Heath School, Romford Essex, leading the day. He suggested that subject to SACRE's support, places could be offered to two teachers from each of Herefordshire's special schools.

The Lead Officer for SACRE reported that if SACRE were minded to support the event then up to £200 could be used from the SACRE budget.

**RESOLVED: that £200 be used from the SACRE budget to support the joint event with Gloucestershire SACRE.**

#### **101. TEACHER NETWORK MEETINGS - UPDATE**

SACRE considered a report on attendance at regional network meetings for teachers (twilight sessions).

The Consultant for RE reported that while recent network meetings for teachers had provided a good range of interesting and informative debates, unfortunately the numbers attending had been very low. He commented that from the survey, reported earlier, teachers were requesting more training opportunities which this type of event provided and therefore it was disappointing that more teachers hadn't attended. Further efforts would be made to ensure that event details were arranged and advertised well in advance.

A suggestion was made that the theme of that event could also be advertised.

A further suggestion was made that SACRE members could be invited to attend and contribute.

SACRE thanked the Consultant for RE for organising the events and encouraged him to continue to offer this training opportunity.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

#### **102. NASACRE AGM 2012**

SACRE considered nominating a delegate to attend the National Association of SACRE(NASACRE) 2012 AGM and nomination to vacancies on NASACRE.

The Democratic Services Officer reported that the NASACRE AGM would be held on 23 May 2012 in London with the key note speakers being Bob Jackson, Professor of Religious Education, University of Warwick, and Lat Blaylock.

He also reported that nominations were also being sought from NASACRE to fill the posts of Secretary and Treasurer together with vacancies on the Executive Committee. All nomination had to be submitted by 25 April.

SACRE noted that the Venerable Tsultrim Tenzin Choesang would be representing both Worcestershire and Gloucestershire SACREs and was willing to represent Herefordshire and suggested that the cost of attendance could be split between the three authorities

**RESOLVED: That**

- 1. The Venerable Tsultrim Tenzin Choesang be nominated to attend the NASACRE AGM in London;**
- 2. The Lead Officer be authorised to negotiate the apportioning of costs with the other authorities.**

3. the Venerable Tsultrim Tenzin Choesang present an overview of the conference to the next meeting; and
4. any further nominations for attending the conference to be agreed by the Chairman.

#### **103. REVISED SACRE CONSTITUTION**

SACRE considered a number of revisions to its Constitution.

The Democratic Services Officer reported that following the last meeting a review had been undertaken of the constitution by comparing it against the exemplar constitution on the NASACRE website and against a number of other SACRE's.

He emphasised that while the law relating to the constitution and administration of a SACRE had not changed a number of suggested changes, which were highlighted to the meeting, had been identified that would provide greater clarity.

In considering the revised constitution SACRE noted the omission of one Buddhist representative from Group (A).

SACRE debated the intended co-option of a Humanist representative and agreed that Mr Akkerman of the Welsh Marches Humanist Group be invited to address the next meeting.

#### **RESOLVED: That**

1. Subject to the inclusion of one Buddhist representative in Group (A) the revised constitution be approved with immediate effect;
2. Mr Akkerman, Welsh Marches Humanist Group, be invited to address the next meeting.

#### **104. DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS 2012 - 2013**

SACRE noted that future meetings had been arranged for 2.00pm at Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on:  
Friday 13 July 2012  
Tuesday 27 November 2012  
Friday 1 March 2013.

#### **105. LEAD OFFICER FOR SACRE**

Mrs Wendy Boulter, Lead Officer for SACRE informed the meeting that she anticipated that the July meeting would be her last as she would be handing over the Lead Officer role to Judith Tinsley, School Improvement Advisor. Ms Tinsley had recently joined the directorate from Oxfordshire Council.

The meeting ended at 3.25 pm

**CHAIRMAN**