

MINUTES of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Monday, 20th March, 2006 at 2.55 p.m.

Present: Councillor J. Stone (Chairman)

Councillor Mrs. W.U. Attfield, Mrs. C. Ault, Revd. P. Barlow,
Mrs. J. Brown, Mrs S McCamley, Mrs A. Mundy, Mr. Z. Pandor,
Mr. J. Rendall, Mr M. Rollnick and Revd. I. Terry

57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor P E Harling, Ms K Mayglothing and Mr K Scot.

The Committee Officer (Scrutiny) reported that Father M. Donnelly, Roman Catholic Representative on Group A, had accepted an appointment in Cardiff and had therefore resigned from SACRE. The diocesan authority had been contacted regarding a replacement.

58. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no named substitutes.

59. MINUTES

With reference to Minute No 52 – Proposed talk by the Chief Executive of Liberal Judaism – Mr Rollnick briefly reported that following consultation, the current timetable for Rabbi Daniel Rich's visit would be that he would visit and give a talk at Wigmore High School on Friday 9th June. On Monday 12th June he would, if possible, visit a number of secondary schools culminating at The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School between 4pm and 6pm with an open forum meeting for all RE Co-ordinators.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 28th November, 2005 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

60. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No written questions had been received.

61. PRESENTATION ON THE SIKH FAITH

SACRE received a presentation on the Sikh faith and discussed educational issues relating to teaching the faith in Herefordshire Schools.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Harvinder Singh and Mr Popinder Matharu to the meeting and invited them to inform the meeting about their religion.

Mr Singh commented that while Sikhism was Britain's third most popular religion, few Sikhs lived in Herefordshire. He gave a presentation explaining the basis of the Sikh faith, its customs and method of worship and explained that he had been initiated into the Khalsa, the core community of committed initiated men and women within the wider Sikh faith.

Responding to a comment that Sikh children seemed to have a detailed knowledge of their faith from quite an early age, Mr Singh explained that many of the younger generation Sikhs wanted to retain their identity and knowledge of their ancestry. Sikhs took pride in learning and this included learning about other faiths, including the Bible, and many celebrated other faith festivals as part of that learning.

Mr Singh indicated his willingness to, if this would be of interest, arrange for either himself or other members of the Sikh faith to give presentations to local schools.

The Chairman thanked both Mr Singh and Mr Matharu for attending and for giving such an interesting insight into the Sikh faith.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted.

**62. THE NEW RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AGREED SYLLABUS FOR
HEREFORDSHIRE**

SACRE noted that at an earlier meeting of the Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus Conference, the revised Syllabus for Religious Education had been approved unanimously and had been recommended to the Local Education Authority for implementation from Sept 2006.

63. GUIDANCE TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS ON COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

SACRE was informed of progress in producing the Guidance to Primary Schools on Collective Worship.

Mr Rendall reported that there had been a good response to the draft Guidance and that the document was in its final stages of preparation. Apart from the inclusion of a foreword section and proof reading, the document was ready to go to the printers.

SACRE debated the launch of the Guidance and a number of suggestions, in addition to the original suggestion minuted at a previous meeting, of including the launch as part of the SACRE Annual Conference, were considered. In principle SACRE wished to launch the Guidance at a separate event to the Conference, thereby highlighting that the Collective Worship Guidance was separate from the Religious Education Syllabus. However, SACRE were mindful of the cost of a separate event, both in organisational terms and in teacher attendance time. To facilitate the early production and launch of the Guidance it was suggested that the Chairman, the Dioceses and Mrs B Knight (General Inspector) meet to consider options and costs for the production and launch of the guidance.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the Chairman, the Dioceses and Mrs Knight meet to discuss and progress the production and launch of the Guidance.

64. 2005 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION EXAMINATION RESULTS

SACRE was informed of the 2005 Herefordshire's examination results in Religious Education.

The Head of School Effectiveness reported that Bath University produced, on a national basis, an analysis of each subject taken at GCSE and at 'A' level. The table of figures set out in appendix 1 to the report was the most accurate set of figures available. However, the national comparators had so far not been made available.

He highlighted that for the full RE course at GCSE 5A*-C achievement had been down in 2005 by 1% to 79%, but 75 more pupils had been entered for the exam and at A*-G achievement had been up by about 2% to 99.7%. The figure of 79% for 5A*-C was likely to be about 15% above the national average based upon previous years. For the short course the A*-C percentage in 2005 was down by 14% but 315 more pupils had been entered. Performance by girls had risen but that of boys had fallen.

He further reported that the reason that only 8 pupils in 2005 appeared to have taken Religious Studies at 'A' level was that the figures did not include those from the Sixth Form College, where approximately 90% of pupils in the County take their 'A' Levels.

SACRE debated the figures and agreed that further clarification was needed, particularly in relation to the comparison against national comparators. In view of the number of pupils taking 'A' Level at the Sixth Form, it was suggested that the Principal and the Head of RE at the Sixth Form be invited to a future meeting to discuss the RE examination results.

RESOLVED:

That (a) the report be noted and further investigation of the RE results be undertaken; and

(b) the Principal and Head of RE at the Sixth Form be invited to a future meeting to discuss RE examination results in the County.

65. 2006 SACRE ANNUAL CONFERENCE - UPDATE

SACRE was updated on arrangements for the 2006 SACRE Annual Conference.

The Consultant for Religious Education reported that, following discussion at the November 2005 meeting, options for a different Conference format had been considered. However, in view of additional cost or organisational issues, the current format had been kept. She further reported that the theme for the 2006 Conference would be 'Exploring the Big Questions'. The Keynote address entitled: 'The Importance of the Big Questions', would be given by Dr. Trevor Cooling.

A draft programme for the Conference was circulated at the meeting and the RE Consultant commented upon the various elements. She reported that the following possible workshop events could be confirmed:

1. From the Big Questions to Classroom: by Trevor Cooling;
2. Looking for God in the Classroom with 6 – 10 year olds: by Lat Blaylock;
and
3. RE in the Foundation Stage. The Spiritual in Every Child Matters: by Sue Peasgood and Jonathan Rendall.

However, in view of the discussion under minute No 63 concerning the launch of the Collective Worship Guidance, she requested guidance on whether to run workshop No 4 'Finding Treasure' – the Collective Worship Guidance for Primary Schools', and whether adding workshop No 5 'Making Room for pupils questions in an RE lesson' would be too many workshops for the event.

SACRE congratulated the Consultant for RE on the number of possible workshops on offer and considered that four workshops should be offered. It was agreed that workshops 1 – 3 be confirmed. Should the launch of the Guidance for Collective Worship be held at a separate event, as reported under minute No 63, then workshop No 5 should be included. Otherwise, workshop No. 4 should be included and workshop No 5 should be dropped.

RESOLVED: That the report and draft programme be noted and four workshops be offered as set out above.

66. DFES & QCA ROADSHOW ON THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR RE

The Consultant for Religious Education reported on her attendance at the National Framework for Religious Education Roadshow held 18th January, 2006 at Birmingham and hosted by the DfES and QCA.

Rev Terry reported that he had also attended the very interesting event on behalf of the Diocese.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

67. NASACRE AGM 2006

SACRE was invited to consider appointing a representative to attend the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE) Annual General Meeting to be held in London on 4th May, 2006.

RESOLVED: That Mrs Bridget Knight, General Inspector, be appointed to attend.

68. MR JONATHAN RENDALL -

The Chairman reported that Mr Jonathan Rendall had announced he would be retiring from the Diocese at the end of April.

On behalf of SACRE the Chairman thanked Mr Rendall for his valuable contribution to the work of the Diocese and for his passionate commitment to Religious Education in the County. He thanked Mr Rendall for serving as the Diocese representative on SACRE since its inception in Herefordshire in June 1998.

SACRE Members wished Mr Rendall a long and happy retirement and the Chairman presented him with a card signed by all in attendance.

69. MR TED ST.GEORGE - HEAD OF SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

The Chairman paid tribute to Mr Ted St. George following the announcement of his retirement.

The Chairman reported that Mr Ted St. George would be retiring from the Council at the end of March 2006 after serving this authority since its inception in 1998 and having previously served for many years with the former Hereford and Worcester County Council. Mr St. George had acted as the Lead Officer from the Education Directorate and had been instrumental in setting up and developing both the Herefordshire SACRE and the Agreed Syllabus Conference.

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) MONDAY,
20TH MARCH, 2006**

On behalf of SACRE the Chairman thanked Mr St. George for his valued advice and support to SACRE over the years and for his efforts to improve education in the County. The Chairman presented Mr St George with a retirement present and a card signed by all in attendance and wished him a long and happy retirement.

The meeting ended at 4.30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN