

MINUTES of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Tuesday, 24 June 2008 at 2.00 p.m.

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

Councillors: Mrs. C. Ault, Revd. P. Barlow, Mrs A Daniel, P Jones CBE, Miss L Langstaff, Mrs S McCamley, Mr Z Pandor and Revd. I. Terry

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor WU Attfild; Ms K Mayglothling and Sr. D. O'Donnell.

2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no named substitutes.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held 3rd March 2008 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No written questions had been received.

5. SACRE MEMBERSHIP

Mr Maurice Rollnick

The Chairman reported that on health grounds, Mr Maurice Rollnick, had reluctantly decided to resign from SACRE.

The Chairman reported that on receiving the resignation letter he had written to Maurice on behalf of SACRE thanking him for his contribution over the years in representing other Faiths and in particular the Jewish community. The Chairman remarked that Maurice's visits to schools had always been a great help, especially with the emphasis on other Faiths and community cohesion.

Members of SACRE present conveyed their best wishes to Mr Rollnick by signing a card.

Reverend Dr Ian Terry

Reverend Dr Ian Terry announced that he would be resigning as Director of Education, Hereford Diocese, and consequently from SACRE as he would be taking up the position of School Chaplain at St Edmunds School, Canterbury.

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On behalf of SACRE the Chairman thanked Reverend Dr Terry for his commitment to education in the County and Diocese and for his valuable contribution to the work of SACRE over the years.

Members of SACRE present conveyed their best wishes to Reverend Dr Terry by signing a card.

Appointment of additional Co-opted Member

SACRE considered a suggestion that Mrs S. Catlow-Hawkins, Headteacher, Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School, Hereford, be appointed a co-opted member of SACRE.

SACRE recommended that the Local Authority appoint Mrs Catlow-Hawkins's as a co-opted Member in view of her commitment to Religious Education and her position as a former member of Gloucestershire SACRE.

Sikh Representative

The Clerk reported that unfortunately a vacancy still existed for a Sikh Member.

RESOLVED: That

- a) **Mr M Rollnick's resignation be noted with regret and Members notify the Clerk of any suggested nomination to fill the vacancy on Committee A (representative of other Faiths as a whole);**
- b) **Reverend I Terry's resignation be noted and the successor Director of Education at the Diocese be invited to become a Member of SACRE on Committee B (Church of England Representative);**
- c) **The Local Authority be requested to appoint Mrs Catlow-Hawkins as an additional co-opted Member.**
- d) **The position regarding a Sikh Member be noted.**

6. FEED BACK FROM THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

SACRE received feedback from the Local Authority on a number of recommendations recorded at Minute No 34 at the March 2008 meeting.

The recommendation together with a summary of the Local Authority response is as follows:

1. the Local Authority and its partners support, resource and encourage such Multi Faith events;
2. It ensures that Multi Faith and Community Cohesion be required elements of training of teachers in Herefordshire;

Response: The Local Authority will be contributing £5,000 towards the next MultiFaith event to be held at Holmer C of E Primary School, Hereford. In addition to supporting the above event the Authority will provide ongoing CPD to teachers and intends setting up a teacher network. Elements of community cohesion were already contained in the authority's Gypsy Roma Traveller Project Programme. For Herefordshire and the theme could also be incorporated into the Headteacher Conference in the autumn.

3. A central point of support for RE Co-ordinators be established, possibly through network meetings, and that termly informal links between schools

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- and teachers be encouraged to develop;
4. the Local Authority be encouraged to set up and resource localised RE meetings for teaching staff;

Response: building on the good work already undertaken and that planned (see previous response) the RE Consultant tabled a paper "Herefordshire RE network group proposal" which set out a proposal for the development of an RE network group for Herefordshire Schools. She commented that both primary and secondary schools should be involved thereby enhancing the opportunity to learn from each other. Ideally the management of the group should be lead by teachers from both primary and secondary sectors with Executive Officer support from herself. Initial administrative support would be funded from SACRE. Other funding streams/grants would be explored as necessary.

5. to support the effective provision of RE the Local Authority provide additional guidance to schools on the improvement of assessment for learning in RE;

Response: It was intended that support for the development of improved assessment practice would be provided through the RE network group.

6. SACRE be provided with information about how schools are making provision for RE within the more flexible curriculum structures.

Response: Currently the Authority had no method of collecting and collating information on how schools were making such provision. The Authority will be approaching the School Improvement Partners (SIP) about getting them to include in one of their five school visits a question or two about how provision is made. It was noted that how the question was phased would need careful thought. In addition to this the RE Consultant would continue her school monitoring visits. The results would be collated and reported to SACRE at appropriate intervals.

SACRE were concerned that monitoring RE in schools was central to their roll and this was extremely difficult to achieve without meaningful data. A number of questions or areas of data were suggested e.g. school budget for RE; date last attended INSET training. It was suggested that the SIPs would need training to ensure they were aware of the intentions behind the questions.

RESOLVED: That

- a) the response be noted and through the Lead Officer for the SIPs team be requested to question schools on their RE provision as part of their visits to schools;
- b) on the assumption that the SIPs team agree to question schools then training be given to the SIPs team on the background to the questions;
- c) the RE Consultant continue her monitoring visits to selected schools;
and
- d) The results of all RE monitoring be reported to a future meeting.

7. FREE RESOURCES FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SACRE noted that free copies of 'Christianity Unpacked 'triple CD and teachers guide and free copies of 'The Jewish Way of Life' CD Rom, produced by faith communities, were due to be despatched to schools.

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The RE Consultant commented that both were useful resources and it was commendable that faith communities were able to provide these resources to schools.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted and the Chairman write to both organisations to thank them for supplying the useful resource.

8. HEREFORDSHIRE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES PLAN - UPDATE

SACRE noted the outcome of its input to the consultation on the draft Herefordshire Children and Young Peoples Plan.

Further to discussion and consideration at the March 2008 meeting of the Working Groups suggested response to the consultation and subsequent submission to the Authority, the Chairman relayed the final wording in the Children and Young Peoples Plan 2008-2011, as set out at paragraph 3 to the agenda report.

SACRE were pleased to note the inclusion of 'spirituality' in the Plan.

For information Members were issued with copies of the Children and Young People's version of the Plan.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

9. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN CHURCH SCHOOLS

SACRE invited the Diocese and Archdiocese to provide reports for the December 2008 Meeting on the standards and quality of Religious Education in Church schools in the County.

RESOLVED: That the Diocese and Archdiocese be invited to provide reports for the December 2008 meeting on the standards and quality of Religious Education in Church schools in the County.

10. SACRE CONFERENCE 2008 - UPDATE

SACRE received an update on preparations for the SACRE Conference 2008.

The RE Consultant reported that, as originally planned, a presentation would be made to the Conference by St Paul's CE Primary School. Unfortunately, Whitecross High School were not now unable to make a presentation and the conference timetable had been adjusted accordingly. The Conference Key note speaker would be Mark Chater, QCA.

She further reported that in accordance with discussion at the last meeting (Minute No.35) conference details were also to be sent to Chairs of Governors. However, the Local Authority did not have access to information regarding local incumbents and she requested whether the Diocese could forward the information on behalf of the Authority. The Director of Diocesan Education confirmed that the Diocese would be pleased to assist.

It was noted that this year's conference, to be held on 2nd October, unfortunately coincided with Ramadan.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted and the Diocese be thanked for their assistance.

11. MULTI FAITH EVENT FOR CHILDREN

SACRE received an update on Multi Faith events for children in Herefordshire.

The RE Consultant was pleased to report that three events had been held at Holmer Primary School (October 2007 and January 2008 supported by the Local Network Fund and June 2008 by TDA grant) and that, as reported earlier, a further event would be supported by the Local Authority. Encouragingly a number of individual schools, or schools clusters, had organised their own very successful events. Whitecross High School were also interested in hosting a similar event. She estimated that over half of the schools in the County had now sent representative teachers and pupils to events.

She further commented that as a result of representatives from Gloucestershire attending Herefordshire events, similar events were now planned for schools in Gloucester and the Forest of Dean.

SACRE again congratulated Mrs Judy Cecil, Headteacher at Holmer CE Primary School and members of the Herefordshire Multi Faith Development Group on their enthusiasm and willingness to organise events.

RESOLVED: that

- a) **the report be noted and the support of the Local Authority in providing £5,000 towards the next event be welcomed.**
- b) **Mrs J Cecil, Headteacher at Holmer CE Primary School, be invited to address SACRE at their next meeting on how the Multi Faith events had gone, advice for future events and whether she had plans for further events.**

12. ROLL OUT OF THE SECONDARY CURRICULUM - UPDATE

SACRE received an update on the roll out of the Secondary Curriculum.

The RE Consultant reported that September 2008 would see the impact of the introduction of the secondary curriculum. The new curriculum provided opportunities for schools for greater flexibility and cross curriculum teaching. She commented that where RE is already strong, the curriculum will provide many opportunities for the continued development of the subject, but warned that where it was weak there was great potential for further marginalisation. She reported that an area briefing had been held at The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School, Hereford, on 13th March, which had been well attended by High Schools and had provided an opportunity to share planning and development experience to take back to schools. There had been strong support for further meetings at secondary level and to continue contact with colleagues.

SACRE noted that there was no change to the statutory requirement for RE and that the Locally Agreed Syllabus was already in line with the non statutory Framework. It was suggested that problems arose when schools didn't understand what the curriculum was asking for.

The RE Consultant commented that where RE was marginalised in school, concerns

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may arise that the school would fall behind in its results.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and provision in secondary schools be monitored through the additional SIP question referred to at minute No. 6.

13. NASACRE ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2008

The SACRE Lead Officer reported upon her attendance at the NASACRE Annual Conference 2008.

The SACRE Lead Officer reported that the conference had been well worth while and the key note speaker, Karen Armstrong, had been wonderful and recommended that she be considered as a speaker at a future SACRE Conference. A report of proceedings and papers issued at the Conference were included in the agenda. A fuller report was available in SACRE News (Summer 2008) which had been issued to Members for information.

Following earlier debate concerning Multi Faith events, reference was made to Mr Alan Brine, HMI, comment (reported in the agenda papers) concerning how difficult it can be for schools to organise multi faith events because of concern about parental response. Acknowledging that events may be organised differently, the Lead Officer commented that, to her knowledge, thankfully only very minor concern had been expressed locally. It was suggested that one method of allaying concern would be to invite the concerned parent to the event.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

14. NEXT MEETING

SACRE noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 2.00 pm in No1 Committee Room at the Shirehall, St Peter's Square, Hereford.

The meeting ended at 3.30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

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