

A G E N D A

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Date: **Tuesday, 24th June, 2008**

Time: **2.00 p.m.**

Place: **The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35
Hafod Road, Hereford**

Notes: Please note the **time, date** and **venue** of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

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Herefordshire Council

AGENDA

for the Meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

To: Councillor J Stone (Chairman)

Councillor WU Attfield, Mrs. C. Ault, Revd. P. Barlow, Mr. P. Bowen, Mrs. J. Brown, Mrs A Daniel, Councillor P Jones CBE, Miss L Langstaff, Ms. K. Mayglothling, Mrs S McCamley, Mrs. G. Morris, Sr. D. O'Donnell, Mr Z Pandor, Revd. L Rickards and Revd. I. Terry

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| <p>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>To receive apologies for absence.</p> | |
| <p>2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)</p> <p>To receive details of Members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Member of the Committee.</p> | |
| <p>3. MINUTES</p> <p>To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2008.</p> | 1 - 8 |
| <p>4. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)</p> <p>To answer any pre-received written questions from members of the public.</p> | |
| <p>5. SACRE MEMBERSHIP</p> <p>To update on the Membership of SACRE.</p> | |
| <p>6. FEED BACK FROM THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</p> <p>To receive feed back from the Local Authority on a number of recommendations recorded at Minute No. 34 at the March 2008 meeting namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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; 3. A central point of support for RE Co-ordinators be established, possibly through network meetings, and that termly informal links between schools and teachers be encouraged to develop; 4. the Local Authority be encouraged to set up and resource localised RE meetings for teaching staff; 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; 6. SACRE be provided with information about how schools are making provision for RE within the more flexible curriculum structures. | |

- 7. FREE RESOURCES FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**
To note the receipt of free copies of 'Christianity Unpacked' triple CD and Teachers Guide and free copies of 'The Jewish Way of Life' CD Rom for issue to schools.
- 8. HEREFORDSHIRE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES PLAN - UPDATE** 9 - 16
To report the outcome of SACREs input to the consultation on the draft Herefordshire Children and Young Peoples Plan.
- 9. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN CHURCH SCHOOLS**
To invite the Diocese and Archdiocese to provide reports for the December meeting on the standards and quality of Religious Education in church schools in the County.
- 10. SACRE CONFERENCE 2008 - UPDATE**
To provide an update on the preparations for the SACRE Conference 2008.
- 11. MULTI FAITH EVENT FOR CHILDREN**
To update on current activity on Multi Faith events for children in Herefordshire.
- 12. ROLL OUT OF THE SECONDARY CURRICULUM - UPDATE**
To update SACRE on the roll out of the Secondary Curriculum.
- 13. NASACRE ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2008** 17 - 30
Report by SACRE Lead Officer following her attendance at the NASACRE Annual Conference.
- 14. NEXT MEETING**
To note that the next meeting is scheduled for 2.00pm on Monday 1st December 2008 in No.1 Committee Room, Shirehall, St Peter's Square, Hereford.

COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Monday, 3 March 2008 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor J Stone (Chairman)

Mrs. C. Ault, Revd. P. Barlow, Mr. P. Bowen, Mrs. J. Brown,
Mrs A Daniel, P Jones CBE, Miss L Langstaff, Mrs S McCamley,
Sr. D. O'Donnell, Rev L Rickards and Revd. I. Terry

28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs WU Attfield; Mr Z. Pandor and Mr M Rollnick.

29. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no named substitutes.

30. WELCOME TO ROMAN CATHOLIC REPRESENTATIVE

The Chairman welcomed Sister Denise O'Donnell to SACRE. Sister Denise joined SACRE as the Roman Catholic representative on Committee A.

31. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held 10th December 2007 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

32. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No written questions had been received.

33. SACRE RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT HEREFORDSHIRE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES PLAN

SACRE considered its response to the draft Herefordshire Children and Young Peoples Plan.

At its December meeting SACRE received an introduction to the Children and Young Peoples Plan and, to enable a response to be made to the consultation, decided to form a small group who would review the draft plan and bring their suggested response to SACRE.

SACRE considered the suggested response by the group, copies of the consultation response form having been circulated at the meeting, and the Consultant for RE, together with other members of the group, took SACRE through their reasoning behind the suggested amendments to include spiritual development/spiritual health, creativity and the adoption of positive values in the sections relating to mental health;

educational attainment of children and young people, particularly at Key Stages 1 and 2.

RESOLVED: that the suggested response to the draft Children and Young Peoples Plan as formulated by the working group be agreed and submitted to the Local Authority.

34. FINDINGS FROM SCHOOL MONITORING VISITS - AUTUMN 2007 - SPRING 2008

SACRE considered the findings from school Religious Education monitoring visits undertaken between Autumn 2007 and Spring 2008, and considered any themes arising from the monitoring visits.

The Consultant for RE reported that a sample of primary schools (16) were offered the opportunity of a visit to help them with monitoring and evaluating their provision for the statutory teaching and learning of RE. These schools were selected as they were due an Ofsted inspection. The sample included both Diocesan and Community schools. Two had only recently been visited in the previous sample, so were not included again. 5 others responded positively to the invitation. In addition, a new RE coordinator requested a visit. One high school also requested a visit.

There was a delay in organising the primary school visits due to her commitments to the Multifaith event's for children held in September 2007 and January 2008. This resulted in two of the schools requesting that, due to time factors and other pressures, their visits be put 'on hold'.

Two community primary schools have been visited. One other monitoring visit arranged for March has been postponed until April at the request of the Head. One visit has been reorganised (in consultation with the school and diocese) to become an inset staff meeting on assessment.

She further reported that in addition to formal visits other sources of information had been used namely through activities such as the multi-faith event, the SACRE Conference and the 'Finding Treasure' collective worship training. She acknowledged that while this was qualitative rather than quantitative research, and not necessarily representative, it did provide an indication of some of the 'successes' and also the areas requiring further support and development. SIAS Inspection reports from the Anglican Diocese also provided information about RE in church schools.

She further commented on the following themes which were debated by the meeting:

Multi-faith events – these events had: actively involved pupils and teachers in meeting people from at least five faith communities; encouraged children and teachers to articulate questions for faith visitors and reflect on their own beliefs and values; shared their experiences through speaking, listening and presentation activities back in the school; raised the profile of RE in the 32 schools who had participated in the Holmer based event so far; directly led to similar events being run in 2 other schools; helped to share good practice and develop understanding of RE standards and expectations for teachers – through the training activities associated with the two Holmer schools events. The events had also contributed strongly to the community cohesion agenda of enabling pupils to meet and interact with people from other communities – and explore shared values.

SACRE considered the means of continuing to support and encourage such Multi-faith events and to ensure that multi faith and community cohesion issues were required elements of teacher training in Herefordshire.

The effectiveness of RE Co-ordinators - Enthusiastic and informed RE co-ordinator's raise expectations, encourage the subject to be valued and support effective teaching and learning. In one of the schools visited the RE co-ordinator had made a significant impact on standards and attitudes towards the subject, in the other, a newly appointed co-ordinator was already beginning to transform the 'very low profile' the subject seemed to have had previously.

SACRE considered that a central point of support for co-ordinators through network meetings and informal links should be developed. SACRE wished to encourage the setting up of localised RE network meetings. The setting up of a data base of RE co-ordinators would be beneficial to facilitate setting up meetings and the dissemination, if possible by e-mail, of information.

Standards of achievement and assessment for learning – She reported that feedback through informal conversation, together with findings from SIAS reports indicated that carefully thought out measures for recognising pupils achievement (assessment) were not yet in place in many schools.

SACRE considered the means of providing further support to schools to improve assessment for learning in RE. It was noted that SACRE had no power to inspect RE in schools and therefore had to rely on being invited to visit. They debated how to encourage schools that were reluctant to engage in the visits and suggested that the style of the offer be reconsidered so that there was no misinterpretation of the intentions.

Time for RE – She reported that there was a perceived concern about the dangers of RE slipping off the curriculum. There was a need for guidance to co-ordinators about how to manage the pressures and opportunities of the changing curriculum. She gave an example that a school had talked about an event replacing existing provision for RE. The introduction of the New Secondary curriculum was also raising questions about how to ensure that statutory RE was delivered within the more flexible and interdisciplinary possibilities of the revised key stage 3 curriculum.

SACRE debated the provision of support to schools and the delivery of RE in a changing school curriculum. SACRE acknowledged that trips and events can take longer than a lesson. It was emphasised that flexibility in subject teaching time was needed and that elements of RE could be included in other subject teaching and therefore a degree of quid pro quo was needed.

RESOLVED: That

a) SACRE recommend to the Local Authority that:

- 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 the training of teachers in Herefordshire;**
- 3. A central point of support for RE Co-ordinators be established, possibly through network meetings, and that termly informal links between schools and teachers be encouraged to develop;**

4. The Local Authority be encouraged to set up and resource localised RE meetings for teaching staff;
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;
6. SACRE be provided with information about how schools are making provision for RE within the more flexible curriculum structures; and

b) the SACRE Conference explores ways in which RE can be delivered effectively at the heart of a changing curriculum.

35. SACRE CONFERENCE 2008 - UPDATE ON PLANNING

SACRE considered plans for the 2008 SACRE annual Conference.

The Consultant for RE reported upon, and circulated, a draft programme for the Conference. The key note speaker would be Dr Mark Chater, QCA Programme Advisor, Partnerships and Evidence Team, who would address the Conference on the theme of "RE at the heart of a changing curriculum". Presentations would be made by students of Whitecross High School and St Paul's C of E Primary School. Delegates would choose from both morning and afternoon workshops, one of which was specifically aimed at secondary schools.

On debating the delegate fee, SACRE noted a comment that a number of training events run by the Local Authority were free and questioned whether further support could be made towards offsetting the Conference delegate fee.

Arising from debate on advertising the Conference it was suggested that letters/flyers be sent not only to the school heads and RE subject leaders but also to Chairs of Governors and, where possible, the incumbents of team ministries. It was further suggested that in view of: the changes to the curriculum; the importance of social cohesion, and the opportunity for continued professional development (CPD), the benefits to the RE subject leader attending the Conference be highlighted.

RESOLVED: That the report on plans for the SACRE Annual Conference be noted and the suggestions regarding the advertising of the Conference be implemented.

36. SPEECH BY JIM KNIGHT MP, MINISTER OF STATE (SCHOOLS & LEARNING)

SACRE considered the content and implications of the speech by Jim Knight MP, Minister of State (Schools & Learning) given at the QCA/NASACRE conference on 17 January 2008. A copy of the speech had been included in the agenda.

The Chairman commented that it was pleasing to hear a Government Minister acknowledging that Religious Studies was more popular than ever and that it was the third fastest growing subject at GCSE. He welcomed the statement that Mr Knight's Ministry would be working with the Department of Communities and Local Government to raise the profile of SACREs. He further commented that while the announcement of a further £1 million package of support measures to help spread best practice across the schools and authorities was welcomed, this funding would probably go directly to national bodies rather than schools and SACREs.

It was noted that £1 million towards RE was a small sum when compared to the millions put into other curriculum subjects.

The Consultant for RE reported that a review of the guidance on RE (Department for Education Circular 1/94) was well overdue. It was noted that the guidance needed to be brought up to date to include reference to the non-statutory framework and to support schools in their new duty to promote community cohesion. The intention would be to separate guidance on RE from guidance on collective worship. The focus of the review would be on RE with Collective Worship being considered in the future.

RESOLVED: that the speech by Mr Jim Knight MP and comments recorded above be noted.

37. DUTY OF SACRE TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY COHESION

SACRE considered the duty to support Community Cohesion highlighted in the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) publication "Guidance on the duty to Promote Community Cohesion".

Copies of the publication had been supplied to members prior to the meeting.

The introduction to the guidance stated "From September 2007 schools will also be under a new duty to promote community cohesion. Most schools already consider this as a fundamental part of their role and already work in ways which promote community cohesion. Similarly, many local authorities are working to promote community cohesion and should also regard this as an area to support schools." The document looked at ways in which schools can build on what is happening already in the light of the new duty.

Reference was made to page 9 of the document (section 3.2 What does a school need in promoting community cohesion?) and in particular:

"Many schools have built very successful approaches to using the curriculum and teaching and learning techniques as a tool in building community cohesion, for instance, by providing:

- Opportunities across the curriculum to promote shared values and help pupils to value differences and to challenge prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping. As well as the opportunities in citizenship described above, there are opportunities across the curriculum and in the new programmes of study for Religious Education (RE) and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE).
- A programme of curriculum based activities whereby pupils' understanding of community and diversity is enriched through fieldwork, visits, for example to places of worship, and meetings with members of different communities."

SACRE acknowledged that schools received many documents, but it hoped that this document will encourage schools to raise the profile of RE, noting the particular contribution the subject can make to the community cohesion agenda. SACRE hoped that it will lead to schools giving greater emphasis to RE in the curricular timetable.

RESOLVED: that the publication "Guidance on the duty to Promote Community Cohesion" be noted.

38. FEEDBACK ON THE 2ND MULTI FAITH EVENT HELD JANUARY 2008

SACRE received feedback from the 2nd Multi Faith event held January 2008 organised by the Herefordshire Multi Faith Development Group.

Following the very successful Multi Faith conference in September 2007 this further conference had been organised by the Herefordshire Multi Faith Group.

SACRE were informed that the two-day conference for 10 and 11 year olds from 16 county primary schools had been held at Holmer Primary School, Hereford. Pupils and teachers had met representatives of four separate non-Christian faiths and in feedback had reported an enjoyable and uplifting experience. The pupils were introduced to Hinduism through Rangoli pattern making and Hindu storytelling. They learned Sikhism through spiritual music, the Jewish religion from festival celebrations, dance and games, and Islam via an Arabic calligraphy workshop.

SACRE were pleased to learn that arising from the conferences similar learning events had been organised by individual schools, some of which had been reported in the local press. A further two conferences were being planned for 2008/9.

Responding to questions on whether the event might be suitable for pupils at Special schools it was thought that, with minor changes, it could, as it contained a high degree of creative activity.

SACRE thanked Mrs J Cecil, Head of Holmer Primary School, for again hosting the event.

It was suggested that a display based on the Multi Faith conferences be provided at the Annual Conference so that delegates could reflect back on the events one year on.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

39. QCA GUIDE FOR WRITING AN AGREED SYLLABUS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SACRE noted the publication by QCA of guidance to Agreed Syllabus Conferences on reviewing or revising a locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education using the National Framework, copies having been supplied to Members prior to the meeting.

40. ROLL OUT OF THE NEW SECONDARY CURRICULUM - UPDATE

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

The Consultant for RE reported that a regional briefing would take place on 10 March in Birmingham and that a small number of representatives from Herefordshire schools would be attending. The Local Authority had also set up a Subject Leaders meeting for 13 March to which the Regional Subject Advisor would attend and inform of developments so far e.g. on compelling learning activity and disciplined innovation.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

41. SACRE ANNUAL REPORT TO QCA

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) MONDAY, 3 MARCH 2008

SACRE were informed of changes to the format of the SACRE Annual Report to QCA.

The Democratic Services Officer reminded Members that in autumn 2006 QCA piloted a new reporting format for drawing up SACRE annual reports. The piloted format had been revised in light of the experience gained and in response to other comments and observations. The revised new format is optional as SACREs may use it voluntarily, as an alternative to the existing (1997) annual report format. The new template contained five main sections with some general summary questions at the end. Within each section there were specific questions that were designed to capture information on aspects of SACREs work. The specific nature of the questions also facilitated the annual analysis of reports by QCA.

The Democratic Services Officer reported that he would be consulting the Lead Officer and the Consultant for RE on the future use of the template.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

42. NASACRE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

SACRE were invited to nominate a delegate to attend the NASACRE Annual Conference to be held 10.30 am at Mander Hall, Hamilton House, London on Thursday 8th May 2008.

RESOLVED: That Bridget Knight, Lead Officer, be nominated as Herefordshire SACREs delegate with the Chairman, Councillor J Stone as reserve.

43. FUTURE MEETING DATES

SACRE noted that the following provisional dates had been identified and that confirmation would be issued in due course:

- 2pm Tuesday, 24th June, 2008, at Brockington, Hafod Road, Hereford
- 2pm Monday, 1st December, 2008, Shirehall, Hereford.
- 2pm Monday, 9th March, 2009, Shirehall, Hereford.

The meeting ended at 3.45 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

HEREFORDSHIRE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES PLAN - UPDATE

Report By: Democratic Services Officer

Purpose

1. To report the outcome of SACREs input to the consultation on the draft Herefordshire Children and Young Peoples Plan.

Report

2. In December 2007 SACRE received an introduction to the Herefordshire Children and Young Peoples Plan. To enable a response to be made to the consultation SACRE formed a small group to review the draft plan and bring a suggested response to SACRE. The suggested response was submitted to the March 2008 meeting when the Consultant for RE and other members of the Group took SACRE through the reasoning behind their suggested wording. Their suggestions centred on amendments to include spiritual development/spiritual health, creativity and the adoption of positive values in the sections relating to mental health; educational attainment of children and young people, particularly at Key Stages 1 and 2.

3. The final Plan has now been produced and Philippa Granthier, Business Manager, Children's Trust, has fed back the following in relation to SACREs contribution:

the priority area under the be healthy section was amended to " promote emotional health and well-being..." and one of the actions is to "support and encourage schools to promote universal spiritual, mental and emotional health through curriculum / school ethos". This has also been amended in the enjoy and achieve section where there is an action to "implement the social, emotional and spiritual aspects of learning". The definition we use for emotional health includes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children (glossary).

4. The main Plan is available from the Council's Web site on the following link:
http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/community_and_living/young_people/26247.asp Copies of the Plan will be available at the meeting.
5. An overview of the comments received during the consultation is attached for information.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.

Herefordshire Children's Trust

Report on the consultation of the Children and Young People's Plan 2008-2011

1. Background

The Children's Trust is a statutory partnership of local agencies across Herefordshire that commission and deliver services to children, young people and their families. This covers children and young people from 0-19 years of age and up to 25 for those young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The partner agencies include:

- Herefordshire Council, including schools
- Herefordshire Primary Care Trust, including GPs
- Herefordshire Voluntary Sector Alliance
- West Mercia Constabulary
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire Learning and Skills Council
- Connexions, Herefordshire and Worcestershire
- Herefordshire Hospitals NHS Trust
- Worcestershire and Herefordshire Youth Offending Service
- Herefordshire Probation Service

The Children and Young People's Plan, a statutory document, contains the key priorities of the Children's Trust. The priorities have been debated and discussed during November and December 2007 at various forums to arrive at a draft document. This has included children and young people and professionals. Over an eight week period between January and March 2008 the draft plan went through a formal consultation exercise, as laid down in statutory guidance, involving various forums, agencies and individuals. These were all contacted either by email, post or through presentations and attendance by officers at various meetings.

2. Consultation Responses

The total number of responses received was 44. The majority of responses were received mainly from individual / professional workers, with 14 from statutory organisation / service providers and 6 from the voluntary sector / infrastructure organisation. Additionally representatives on the Children's Trust outcome groups also contributed their views, thereby encompassing a broad range of partners.

The following give an indication of the views and responses received, in similar groupings rather than listing all the detailed feedback received:

2.1 The right priorities for children and young people in Herefordshire?

There was general agreement that the priorities within the plan were correct for Herefordshire children and young people at this time.

2.2 However there were some **issues or gaps in the plan** that respondents felt had not been covered. These included:

- working with fathers and families
- working with younger children i.e. before they reach school age and hard to reach groups
- language impaired pupils / SEN
- reducing the number of young people who smoke or drink excessive amounts of alcohol
- ensuring every young person has a named adult advocate or supporter
- providing 5 hours of quality PE
- working with young carers
- youth centres and activities for teenagers
- young people with serious mental health difficulties
- to support and provide publicity for organisations providing facilities for young people
- the priorities and outcomes should be much broader, recognising the role of family and community in childhood development
- school travel plans and sustainable travel (improving safety, improving health
- enjoy and achieve should also include development of life/social/emotional skills to be able to enjoy – its not just about schools
- stay safe – e-safety and bullying should be separated into 2 priorities as although interlinked, by having one priority covering both areas it takes away the individual requirements needed for each issue
- lack of speech therapists
- families having sufficient support during pregnancy and immediately after birth
- support for all early provisions to enable them to raise their quality and maintain a quality workforce
- need explicit recognition of the contribution of “spiritual development / spiritual health” in both emotional health and well-being and social, emotional and spiritual aspects of learning
- extended schools needs to be addressed in practical, not theoretical, terms urgently
- well-being, health-wise and socially – a narrow dental priority is too specific than improving general health and well-being
- extra-curricular activities
- recognise that the current sex education regime is not working

2.3 To the question “**does the plan cover all children and young people in Herefordshire**” the following were highlighted as missing:

- young carers
- gifted and talented youngsters
- young people who are less confident and lacking in self-esteem (but don't have learning difficulties or disabilities)

- children who are looked after at care homes provided by external agencies or other county's companies.
- pupils where English is not their first language
- physically disabled children and younger people
- younger children – pre-school and primary
- children and young people from faith backgrounds would be disadvantaged ; the omission of a spiritual dimension would apply to all children and young people
- transition from child to adult services need to be a high priority as this is where a number of young people tend to fall through the gap

2.4 There were many suggestions about **how to involve children, young people and their families in delivering the plan**, which included:

- using partnership working and community development approach
- using different ways and methods of consultation
- a targeted approach
- encourage and assist provision of community support and facilities that provide help for the whole family unit
- provide fun and informal educational programmes and events that are free and cater for the whole family together
- re Gypsy and Traveller communities – through the Specialist Team at West Midlands Consortium Services for Travelling children.
- using corporate consultation processes
- by providing collective opportunities to contribute, e.g. bring the plan to every school in the county, present the ideas to young people and ask for feedback via their tutor groups. Need wider consultation than youth and school councils.
- provide resources for what families actually need
- by ensuring involvement right from the start and giving clear pathways for continuous improvement
- publicity is everything – making sure families know what is on offer to help
- extend the youth survey to wider age group
- expand school councils coverage to 100%
- questionnaires to child / youth based groups e.g. scouts, guides, forces cadet type schemes
- youth offending service – how can they be used to support reaching prevent and deter group members or prolific and other priority offenders
- how to tap into the economic migrant community?
- the need to involve primary school / early years aged children
- using representative groups
- reduce barriers to involvement and talk to people at home; use the media to invite involvement.
- encourage involvement of young people in diverse community activities through volunteering

- concern that current mechanisms e.g. shadow board, if not carefully monitored, can lead to stresses on children not mature enough to handle

2.5 Other comments included:

- how would the plan be implemented and funded, i.e. how would the actions be achieved; concern not to divert funding from one need to another
- how will you know you've achieved what you set out to do?
- ensure full involvement of the voluntary and community sector and help to strengthen their role
- the plan is excellent, logical and well thought through
- the need to protect small schools, and the effect of the schools review on children's health, well-being and educational achievement
- involvement of children and young people in meaningful consultation; and funding is needed to adopt the hear by right standards.
- consultation is not enough – action needs better budgeting and less money spent on talking and writing about issues and more money getting to the grass roots. The most effective organisations should be defined and supported.
- clarity over joint commissioning and what is happening
- is the birth rate really dropping?
- remove schools review paragraph
- need for intensive family support for all families (not just those in crisis) from early pregnancy in preparing for parenthood and during first 2 years of child's life
- need to celebrate successes more – the plan focuses on the areas that need to improve and therefore paint a negative picture
- more emphasis on the role of young people volunteering, training and a wider variety of opportunities to achieve and make a positive contribution
- the role of communities outside school and family in children's well-being

3. Summary

The overall message is one around the Children's Trust agencies supporting families as they are key in providing happy environments in which children can thrive and learn. This is particularly so in those important early years when laying down the basis for future health, happiness and achievement. Additionally, ensuring the Children's Trust involves and engages families, carers, younger children and hard to reach groups, in a variety of methods, are areas that need further work. Consultation and feedback needs to be an ongoing cycle of communication and action.

Re-directing resources from existing services to support the actions in the plan is another challenging area that needs addressing.

4. Next steps

Many individuals and agencies have taken time to look at the plan and to consider its coverage, and for all the comments received, the Children's Trust is very grateful. All the comments received will be considered and where appropriate the Children and Young People's Plan will be amended. Many comments have been quite detailed or specific so although not appropriate to include within the strategic three year plan they will have been directed toward the appropriate outcome group(s) to consider scope and inclusion within the annual delivery plans.

The final Children and Young People's Plan 2008-2011 will be published on the council's website on the 12 May 2008; there will also be a formal launch on the 3 June 2008.

Philippa Granthier
Business Manager, Children's Trust
5 March 2008

Report from Bridget Knight**NASACRE AGM 8 May 2008****Keynote Speaker: Karen Armstrong “The Great Transformation”**

It is obvious to all of us that we are holding the key to humanity in our hands at this time. If we lose the young, we are all lost.

Religion plays a part in this. It is not the cause of terrorism - that is a political imbalance in the world, bad governance and ongoing conflict - but is a fault line. When violence becomes endemic, religion can get sucked in.

Religions are not great monolithic blocks: they are diverse and multiple. Nor are they static: they evolve, grow and adapt to their circumstances. If they do not, they wither away. Each tradition represents a constant dialogue until transcend once and a reality on the ground.

It is important to note that for all our spectacular achievements in modernity it has also been the most violent in history. Because modernity has been violent; everything is affected by violence, even football and schooling. Religion also picks up this violent strain.

200-900 BC- is the period where all the great religions had their roots, and emerged in different parts of the world, all differently but with commonalities. There religions survived not only because they moved people but became they word practical application. Religions teachings are not meant to be cast in stone. The Buddha compared his teachings to a raft that has its uses but should not be a burden for you in terms of quibbling over facts, opinions and speculations. Participation over such things is often a matter of ego and we tend to be an opinionated society.

Religion is not about believing certain credal propositions- it means an engagement and commitment to certain concepts that can only point beyond themselves to the divine. Religion is about doing things in such a way that transforms you at a deeper level so that we become most fully aware. We must lose the ego through not that.

Religion and art both seek to find that which makes us special in a world that is complex and often tragic. Ego and self-preoccupation are the biggest enemies to spiritual development. The first thing the prophet Mohammad did was to introduce the posture of humility for prayer, for surrender of the ego to the divine. Jesus taught the same lesson, emptying himself of ego and accepting the debasement of death on the cross. Paul exhorts us to have the same mind as Jesus and put other people first.

You will not understand the meaning of religion unless you put it into practice.

In every case, the catalyst for major religious change came from the renouncement of violence.

We need to make people aware of the fact that the prophet Mohammed practised non-violence. All the major traditions evolved the Golden Rule “do not do to others what you would not have done to you”. Confucius advises us to look into our heart and see what gives us pain, and to not do these things to others. This introduced people to transcendence and to walk the way of the golden rule. This leads us to compassion and brings us into our relationship with God.

Each of the religious traditions insisted that you could not confine your compassion to those in our ‘group’: “Love our enemies” (and we should appreciate the wit of Jesus here in saying this and not only see him as a solemn man). In Judaism there is constant reference to empathy and the reverence towards strangers.

Ego makes us hold onto slights and persist with anger towards our enemies. It is by overcoming our initial revulsion towards a stranger we become aware of the challenging otherness that is God i.e. God is not necessarily just a cosy manifestation of our own selves.

We need religion that teaches us to recognise the divinity in the other. This demands a very well considered approach, to give all our religious traditions a nudge in the right direction and to encourage all our religious to venerate the other.

Questions to Karen Armstrong:

How can we create QCA’s ‘compelling learning experiences’ for all our children through RE?

Companion is a very rigorous discipline and requires constant application to feel empathy with others.

There is no religious teaching that is not translatable into action; otherwise the action is drained of meaning.

The major religious teaching challenge of our time is to build a global community – if they fail at this they fail as religions.

Teach and introduce pupils to examples of companion and loving kindness - through action in major religions.

We must teach that feelings must point beyond themselves to action and therefore we need to teach our young people to move beyond the self conceit of anger to use that feeling to channel it to make the world a better place. Where are our examples of non-violent action that has produced positive change? How can justice be furthered ethically produced positive change? How can justice be furthered ethically and morally, and how can pressure be put on politicians to this end?

KA proposed teaching the nature of myth to children so that they better understand what is superstition and what is religion. The benchmark is the golden rule: if the religion leads you to practise compassion towards others it is good. We must transmit the relevance and fascination of RE as a subject so that children don't see RE as an irrelevant anachronism but does not heal the troubles of our time.

Further notes from NASARCE AGM:

- **Mark Chater, QCA** (Appendix 1)

Please see RE update April 2008 QCA report on RE. Mark welcomes any comments on this document direct to him.

- NASACRE predicts that costs running costs may well rise over the next year. There will be a grant that may be used to recruit personnel from minority ethnic groups to represent on SACRE (50,000 over 2 years)
 - Recruitment and training grant.
- Training programmes will be offered to new SACRE members on a regional basis.

Alan Brine, HMI (Appendix 2)

Please see NASACRE AGM May 2008 OFSTED report.

The outcomes of inspection into the contribution of RE to community cohesion revealed a very positive link between these two. It also revealed how difficult it can be for schools to organise multi faith events because of concern about parental response.

Attention will next go to creative approaches to RE in an effort to shift 60% satisfactory teaching in RE be good.

Guidance has been issued to all sections 5 inspectors to clarify inspection of RE in academics, and where there are issues of non – compliance.

Alan Brine has instituted a train of all Section 5 reports. RE was referenced in 71% of reports since Autumn 07. He will then compare current inspections to see if the new community cohesion requirements will lead to more references to RE.

Date of next AGM: 5 June 2009, Birmingham

Progress on the RE Strategy

Prof Brian Gates, Chair of the RE Council

Jim Knight announced a joint NASACRE QCA conference the governments intention to support the RE action plan for development.

6 main strategies of action plan in partnership with RE Council and DCSF.

1. Continuing the RE partnership at a national level between the DCSF and RE Council. This is a determination to act together and do things in the best interest of RE.
2. Updating the guidance on religions education.
 - i.e. new guidance in place of what circular 1|94 safe in relation to both RE and SACRE, taking into account and co-co, but deferring on CW. This takes account of SEAL and Community Cohesion.
 - Advice on collective worship could follow but this is not included in the above.
3. Providing better support for RE subject teachers
 - Assisting NATURE to develop its activities with and for teachers.
4. Supporting the effectiveness of local SACRES
5. Supporting the development of a CPD handbook for RE teachers
 - In consultation with QCA and OFSTED.
 -
6. An external review of the nature of materials as commonly used by schools for teaching world religions. 3 or 4 universities have now been invited to tender and the project is expected to be completed by the end of the Summer 2009.

Process for developing the new Guidance:

- Managed by the RE council on behalf of the DCSF.
- With a writing team and Steering Group, drawn from fair communities.
- Serviced by John Beast and Sarah Smalley.

Launch of new guidance: 14 October 2009



Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority

RE Update
April 2008

Introduction

Welcome to the RE update from the QCA for Spring 2008. The purpose of this update is to keep in touch with RE partner organisations. This update lets organisations and individuals in the RE community know about the ways in which the QCA is supporting RE as part of the whole curriculum. The update has links to several web pages, so it can be used electronically and hosted on the websites of RE organisations, as appropriate.

1. Rose Review of the primary curriculum

As part of the Children's Plan published in December 2007 (see) there will be a review of the primary curriculum starting this year, with first teaching in September 2011. The QCA will support Sir Jim Rose in evidence-gathering, writing programmes of study and managing the consultation. The intention is to take the national framework for RE into the new primary curriculum on a non-statutory basis, as happened in the secondary curriculum review. A newly formed group of consultants, representing the various professional RE associations and all the faith/belief communities, will soon begin work on this process.

The key relevant documents are:

Executive Summary of the Children's Plan:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/childrensplan/>

Sir Jim Rose's remit to work with the QCA on the primary review:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/conDetails.cfm?consultationId=1537>

Call for evidence on the primary review:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/downloadableDocs/Primary%20Review%20Document%20v2.doc>

2. RE and Diplomas

QCA has submitted nominations to the DCSF's development group on the Humanities diploma. The names include four RE specialists. RE will be included in this diploma. There is still a need to work out ways in which spiritual/moral development opportunities can be created in the full range of other diplomas.

3. New QCA documents

The following documents are new on the QCA website:

New SACRE reporting format for annual reports

http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_15623.aspx

Guidance for agreed syllabus conferences on making effective use of the non-statutory national framework

http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_15608.aspx

If the documents cannot be found using this URL, the best thing to do is to use the internal search engine and simply type in RE. The five top hits will include working with SACREs, where both the above documents can be found.

The SACRE self-evaluation document will migrate from the Ofsted site to the QCA site later this year.

The 2008 analysis of SACRE annual reports will focus specifically on the contribution and capacity of SACREs to promote community cohesion.

4. Pedagogy in RE

This year QCA will work with Ofsted and other bodies to focus on pedagogical issues in RE. There now exists an opportunity to explore issues in planning and teaching, and to engage in national debate about the nature of good pedagogy in RE. The raw material for this debate comes from several sources: the Ofsted long report (*Making Sense of Religion*, 2007); Mary Hayward's report for Warwick University (*The Teaching of Christianity at KS3*, 2007); the Religious Education Council's commission report (2007); and the work of more than 30 regional support advisers to give training on RE in the new secondary curriculum.

This amounts to a considerable wealth of data on which to build an awareness of good pedagogy in RE. QCA and Ofsted intend to work together on two conferences in 2008. The first event will be for the regional support advisers to reflect on their work. The second will invite academics in RE to sift evidence on pedagogy and to move the debate forward. The purpose of these events is to refresh thinking and to create opportunities

for RE to improve and align itself creatively with the concept-based and skill-based approaches taken in the rest of the curriculum.

5. New GCSE Religious Studies criteria

The new GCSE criteria for Religious Studies reflect the non-statutory national framework by creating two evenly balanced outcomes corresponding to 'learning about' and 'learning from', and by encouraging the use of the full range of concepts, skills and content including religions and beliefs. Awarding bodies are submitting their specifications. First teaching cohorts will start in September 2009, with first examinations for short course in 2010 and for full course in 2011.

6. Spiritual and moral development across the curriculum

The case studies and accompanying commentary on spiritual and moral development are presently in editing stage and will appear on the QCA website soon.

7. QCA participation in the RE action plan and update of Circular 1/94

QCA will be supporting the steering group and writing group to draw up proposals to update the RE and SACRE elements of Circular 1/94. The process will be coordinated by the Religious Education Council in partnership with the DCSF.

NASACRE AGM May 2008 Ofsted Report

1. Ofsted's has received a number of responses, including a very welcome contribution from NASACRE, to its 2007 RE report 'Making Sense of Religion' – available as a download at www.ofsted.gov.uk - While the report was broadly welcomed, points were raised about, for example:
 - Ofsted's evidence base and the implications this has for the reliability of judgements
 - Whether Ofsted is advocating use of the NSNF and whether it is recommending it should become statutory basis for RE
 - The question of whether one or two attainment targets might be the best basis for planning and assessment in the subject
 - The suggestion that the statutory basis for RE in 6th forms might be reviewed
 - The difficulties SACREs face in monitoring the quality of provision in schools.

2. The current round of subject inspection involves 30 visits to primary and 30 to secondary schools each year. This year the visits include a wider range of LAs than in the previous year but we are trying to 'pair' visits so we go to both a secondary and primary in each LA – but this is not always feasible. The visits include as one focus the contribution made by RE to the promotion of community cohesion. We are also looking closely at a number of other threads including:
 - A continuing evaluation of the impact of agreed syllabuses in a wider range of local authorities
 - The teaching of Christianity
 - Continuity and progression in the RE curriculum
 - Innovation in the curriculum delivery of RE

3. We are now including visits to 'good practice' schools both as part of, and in addition to, our routine visits. We are seeking further examples of schools where exceptional good practice exists and would welcome suggestions – with an indication of the particular area of strength.

4. Ofsted has recently issued further guidance to Sec 5 inspectors to clarify the legal basis for RE and set out the responsibilities of inspectors in relation to checks on whether schools are fulfilling their statutory duties. We are now undertaking a systematic review of Sec 5 reports to identify evidence of references to both RE and collective worship. I will provide an indication of our initial findings at the meeting.

5. Ofsted is current developing guidance about the inclusion of a judgement on community cohesion in its inspections of schools from Sept 2008. Appropriate attention will be paid to 'faith' as a dimension of CC, where RE is likely to be a key player.
6. The 2008 HMI RE Conference - scheduled for 20 May 2008 – is being organised in partnership with NATRE with a focus on pedagogy in RE. It will bring together the RSAs appointed to support the roll out of the secondary curriculum and will also involve representation from QCA. As an outcome we hope to provide some useful steers about ways of extending the guidance linked to the non-statutory national framework.
7. A report of the 2007 HMI RE 'event' held jointly with SSAT - focused on Personalising Learning in RE – is being prepared for consideration for publication.
8. Currently considering, along with QCA, whether to review and update the SACRE Self-evaluation Tool published in 2004 to reflect the current context of SACREs more closely. NASACRE will need to be involved in any review.
9. Ofsted has continued to meet with SACREs from across the country to share our work with members and hear from SACREs about their work and concerns. Among the issues that have been raised are:
 - The issue of how SACREs can undertake their responsibility for monitoring the provision for RE/CW and the effectiveness of their Agreed Syllabus
 - The likely impact on RE of the secondary (and imminently, the primary) national curriculum reviews and the issue of how SACREs can respond
 - The implications for RE and SACREs of the new requirement on schools to promote community cohesion – to be inspected from Sept 2008

2008 Chair's Report

I find it astonishing that we have arrived at another AGM of NASACRE. The past year has been one of much activity in the world of RE and I hope that you have been kept up to date by our communications via Newsletters and the Website.

Throughout the year the members of the NASACRE Executive have continued to meet together at least once per term and have kept in contact via email, telephone and small project meetings and post between meetings. Meetings have all been well attended and very busy. In addition to regular items, business has included consideration of and responses to the new reporting format for SACREs from QCA; the Ofsted long report: *Making Sense of Religion*; the proposed revision of Circular 1/94 and the Department for Communities and Local Government's paper *Face to Face and Side by Side*. The executive also met with a senior official from the then DfES to discuss the future of RE and SACREs.

At the end of the last AGM held in the Birmingham Council House, the Executive met to co-opt Tristram Jenkins who has an invaluable role in keeping the first 3 years of Faith Forum project monitoring on track. This enabled Tristram to take an active role in the first Executive meeting of the year.

Our Treasurer Michael Metcalf worked closely with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to organise the London conference held earlier this year at which Jim Knight MP was our keynote speaker.

Members of the Executive have attended the Launch of Islam Awareness Week and contributed to Conferences organised by Teachers' TV and the National Union of Teachers – all of which have enabled us to promote the role of SACREs more widely. NASACRE was represented at Glasgow University's Expert Seminar on its research project *Does RE work?* in February 2008. Several members have been involved in interfaith activities; two people attended the AGM of the Inter Faith Network UK in June 2007 and meetings have been held with the Inter Faith Network to identify common areas of interest and collaboration.

Regional Groups

We continue to consider whether it is possible for the Executive to effectively support regional groups, particularly as we do not have a paid Officer and most of us have 'the day job'. However during this year three regions set up meetings that were either organised in partnership with the Executive or members of the Executive attended; these have proved popular. We have also established a pilot regional area on the NASACRE website that the London Chairs of SACREs were invited to join. A limit of 3 SACRE members for each SACRE was proposed to maintain a manageable site and under the watchful eye of our webmaster, Paul

Hopkins, the use of the site has been at times quite good. A roll-out of an improved 'chat and sharing' area is proposed for the next year.

Keeping in touch

a) Website

As mentioned above, the NASACRE Exec is very grateful to Paul Hopkins for the work he does in developing and maintaining our website. We continue to use it to provide documents and suggestions for agenda items for member SACREs. The area 'For your next SACRE Agenda' is intended to help SACREs to plan their meetings and to keep up to date with current debates and several Clerks and Advisers have expressed their enthusiasm for this section. Another popular area is the Frequently Asked Questions section. These are based on real enquiries from SACREs (which seem regularly to come into the secretary's email in-box late at night!).

b) Newsletter

This year the Newsletters have been designed for print but have been posted on the website. As you are aware the provision of printed copies has been a casualty of our move from Westhill to London. During the next year we will be taking stock of the Office situation and will review the situation of the newsletters. In the meantime it is good to see a developing range of contributors and we hope these provide a good discussion point for your members.

c) Other publications

Work has been completed on rewriting the NASACRE Information Booklet and a review of the document *So You're Joining Your Local SACRE* is underway. An article about the work of SACREs, commissioned by *ACT Now*, the magazine of the Association of Christian Teachers, appeared in the spring 2008 edition.

d) Office

Our NASACRE Administration is being supported at the South London Multifaith and Multicultural resources centre by Yvonne Cameron, the Centre Administrator. We are grateful to the Business Manager at the Lewisham PDC, Joyce Greene and to Yvonne, the RE Centre's Administrator, for holding the fort so swiftly after our short notice from Westhill. The future of our Admin will be discussed during this year.

e) Database

During the year, a small project was set up with funding from the RE Council. This enabled us to commission the design and development of a database for SACRE information including contact details and vacancy information. Over several months Vivienne Brown contacted all SACREs in as many ways as she was able to obtain the relevant information and we are already using the responses to keep our website information current and to inform discussions about a roll-out of the SACRE Recruitment and Training Programme. However what continues to be amazing is how difficult it is to get in touch with a SACRE if

our records become outdated, so please urge all SACRE Clerks / Administrators to let us know as soon as the situation changes in your SACRE so we can be sure to invite you to any events and to include you in the Recruitment and Training Programme if we are in your area.

Young People's Faith Forums

As we come to the AGM we also come to the latest round of Awards for Young People's Faith Forum Projects. Our gratitude to the Westhill Trustees for the funds for these projects can not be over-expressed. These exciting and innovative projects are really making a difference at a local level and we were happy to promote them to the Community Cohesion Unit as examples of good Inter-Faith work undertaken by SACREs around the country. The Executive's YPFF 'team' has met during the year to co-ordinate the initiative and to visit individual projects, often attending keynote events. We are hoping to put reports from all the awards on the website to celebrate their successes – if yours is not yet there please let us have a report as soon as you can. Good luck to this year's successful projects!

Working with Partners

a) Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC)

Members of the Executive attend RE Council meetings, representing the interests of NASACRE and its member SACREs. These have been held in London and Wales this year. I have also served as a Trustee and Board Member of the RE Council's Board of Directors. This has been an interesting experience and has given us the opportunity to consider the developing role of SACREs in the national scene and to make useful contacts and links with other member bodies. A start has been made on the roll out of the recruitment and training programme and we look forward to taking more responsibility for this work in the coming two years.

b) Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)

During the year members of the Executive have participated in several initiatives by the QCA, ensuring that advice is clear and related to local interests.

c) DCSF and the Community Cohesion Unit

Papers developed and meetings held by Executive members with the DCSF and the Community Cohesion Unit contributed to the inclusion of the further development of the SACRE Recruitment and Training Programme in the funding from the Minister announced at the London Conference.

We have also worked with faith communities and HMI to the benefit of SACREs and their work.

During the year we have supported a number of individual SACREs experiencing specific, and often sensitive, challenges and asking for advice. A few SACREs have also requested and received visits from executive members.

I think with this brief report you can see that we have remained busy representing SACRE interests this year – perhaps that is why the last AGM does not seem a year away. I commend the work of our Executive members and those who have worked with us and we look forward to another busy and challenging year ahead.

Denise Chaplin
Spring 2008