

**MINUTES of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held at Committee Room No1, The Shirehall, St Peter's Square, Hereford on Monday, 1 December 2008 at 2.00 p.m.**

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

Mrs M Ault, Mrs L Barker (ne Langstaff), Revd. P. Barlow, Mrs A Daniel, Councillor P Jones CBE and Sr. D. O'Donnell

**15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from: Councillor WU Attfield; Mr P Bowen; Mrs J Brown; Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins; Mrs G Jutle; Ms K Mayglothling; Mrs S McCamley; Mr T Leach; Mr Z Pandor.

**16. NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

There were no substitutes.

**17. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held 24 June 2008 be approved and signed by the Chairman.**

**18. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No written questions had been received.

**19. MEMBERSHIP**

SACRE welcomed Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins as a Co-opted Member; Mrs G Jutle as Sikh representative on Committee A; and Mr T Leach, interim Director of Education, Hereford Diocese, representing the Church of England on Committee B (in their absence)

Mrs L Barker (nee Langstaff) was congratulated on the birth of her daughter, Jemima, who also attended the meeting.

**20. MULTIFAITH EVENTS**

Unfortunately due to sickness Mrs J Cecil, Head of Holmer CE Primary School was unable to attend to discuss her success in organising Multi-faith events and therefore the item was deferred to the March 2009 meeting.

The Consultant for RE reported that an article entitled 'A Wide Range of Religions in Rural Herefordshire' reporting on the multi-faith event at Holmer CE Primary School had appeared in the Autumn 2008 edition of REtoday and copies of the article were circulated to Members.

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SACRE noted that a bid had been submitted for funding to continue to support the multi-faith events.

**RESOLVED: That Mrs J Cecil be invited to attend the March 2009 meeting.**

**21. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION EXAMINATION RESULTS FOR 2008**

SACRE considered the 2008 Religious Education examination results for Herefordshire.

Vicky Ward, General Inspector, Children's Services, presented her report which, together with the appendix to the report, summarised the results for the 2008 GCE and GCSE examinations.

She briefly reported the examination entries and outcomes for each of the Counties High Schools.

She concluded that in general, examination success in Herefordshire was improving and this was in common with the national trend. In relation to RE she cautioned that due to differing school policies over pupil entry for examination, and whether pupils were entered for the full or short course examinations, it was difficult to make any clear conclusions. Furthermore there appeared to be no clear trend between schools entering pupils for the full or short courses.

SACRE appreciated there were variations in the examination results on a school by school basis and thereby noted that not all schools had the benefit of specialist RE teachers. It was further noted that in some cases schools had needed to review staffing levels to balance their budgets.

Noting the varying number of pupils entered for either full or short course examinations SACRE questioned whether all pupils were in fact receiving RE provision in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus and statutory requirements.

The generally very good results were noted and this was a tribute to the students and teachers and SACRE wished all schools continued success in 2009.

**RESOLVED: That the 2008 GCE and GCSE examination results be noted.**

**22. MONITORING STANDARDS AND ACHIEVEMENT IN RE: FEEDBACK FROM  
SCHOOLS VISITS**

SACRE considered the findings from support and monitoring visits to schools during autumn 2008 term.

The Consultant for RE presented her report, copies of which had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting. She commented that in September /October 2008 twelve schools had been offered the chance of a visit and a sample of six had taken up the opportunity of a support and monitoring visit. These schools were offered a visit as they were due an Ofsted inspection.

Her report on the visits covered the four areas of: RE provision; Standards and Achievement; Quality of teaching and learning and Areas for further development.

In relation to RE provision she highlighted that only two of the schools fully complied with the Agreed Syllabus. Two were only just moving to the new syllabus.

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She reported that all the schools visited had seen the visits as helpful and had taken reassurance that they were moving in the right direction. A number of subject teachers had also seen the visit as a spur to attend the network events and Annual Conference.

Her report suggested that SACRE explore ways of working in partnership with schools to continue to provide support to improving planning and assessment of RE in order to enable schools to develop their use of: learning outcomes identified in the syllabus; pupil friendly 'I can statements'; skilful learning strategies for RE and Assessment for Learning in RE.

SACRE concluded that while the small sample indicated there was probably a mixed level of provision in the County, in general there was a commitment in schools to improve the teaching of RE and a willingness to incorporate areas of good practice shown by colleagues.

Questioned whether the local authority employed a specific RE Inspector to inform schools of good practice, SACRE were reminded that the external Consultant for RE was the only subject specific expert available from the authority. While her visits were greatly appreciated, resource limitations in the local authority precluded more schools being visited. SACRE were informed that good practice was disseminated to schools through their attendance at the Annual Conference; network meetings; by the Consultant for RE and by teachers talking to and visiting each other. While good RE teaching practitioners welcomed talking to other teachers this diverted resource time from teaching their own pupils.

**RESOLVED: That the position set out in the report be noted and SACRE formally record its appreciation to Mrs J Mackley, Consultant for RE for undertaking this monitoring and support work.**

**23. STANDARDS OF RE IN HEREFORDSHIRE CHURCH SCHOOLS**

SACRE considered the standards of RE in Herefordshire Church schools from information provided by the Diocese and Archdiocese.

The Democratic Services Officer reminded SACRE that as part of its monitoring of Religious Education and Collective Worship in Herefordshire Schools, at its last meeting, had invited both the Diocese and Archdiocese to submit short reports indicating the outcome of inspections to their schools in Herefordshire.

He reported that the response from the Hereford Diocese, Appendix 1 to the report, indicated that aided schools were complying with the requirements for Religious Education.

The Archdiocese had responded by referring to the inspection reports available on their web site and a summary, Appendix 2 to the report, had been compiled setting out the grades awarded to St. Mary's RC High School, Lugwardine and St Francis Xavier RC Primary School, Hereford, being the latest schools in the County to be reported upon. Full copies of both inspection reports had been supplied to SACRE Members and copies were available from the web site at [www.rcadc.co.uk](http://www.rcadc.co.uk)

SACRE noted that the inspection process for Church schools was far more rigorous in terms of RE than under the Ofsted system of inspection and therefore SACRE congratulated the diocesan schools on their results.

So that areas of good practice could be picked up on and spread to County schools

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SACRE requested that subsequent reports include more commentary on the results.

**RESOLVED: That**

- a) the standards of RE in Herefordshire Church Schools be noted**
- b) the Diocesan Authorities be thanked for providing the information; and**
- c) the Diocesan Authorities be requested to provide more commentary on the results in subsequent reports.**

**24. MONITORING STANDARDS AND ACHIEVEMENT IN RE: QUESTIONS VIA  
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PARTNERS (SIP) TEAM**

SACRE noted the questions to be asked of schools concerning Religious Education during a School Improvement Partner (SIP) visit.

The Lead Officer for SACRE reported that following the meeting on 24 June 2008 the authority had approached the SIP team about getting them to include in one of their visits to schools a question about how RE provision was included in the school. The SIP team had agreed and the question, set out in appendix 1 to the report would be sent to all schools prior to the Spring term round of visits.

She further reported that the results from the questions would be collated, including an indication of any follow up actions taken, and reported to SACRE.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the results be reported to a future meeting.**

**25. 2008 SACRE ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

SACRE received a report on the success of the 2008 SACRE Annual Conference held Thursday 2nd October 2008.

The Chairman congratulated Joyce Mackley and all concerned on producing another very successful Conference. He particularly commended her for leading one of the workshops at very short notice due to the workshop leader being involved in an accident while on route to the venue.

The Consultant for RE reported that approximately 45 delegates had attended and the anecdotal feedback indicated delegates had found it a very enjoyable and informative conference. She reported that one delegate had said they were inspired yet slightly intimidated, referring to how they were going to aspire to all the good works being done at other schools.

SACRE wished to record their thanks to Angela Daniels, Kingsland CE Primary School and Kate Mayglothling, Wigmore High School, for leading two of the workshops and to Robert Hollis and pupils at St Paul's CE Primary, Hereford, for their excellent presentation to the Conference, the pupils portraying a fine example of the excellent work going on in their school.

SACRE considered suggestions for the theme of next year's conference and requested that the Consultant for RE meet with volunteers to brainstorm around the theme of going back to basics: 'What is good RE'.

**RESOLVED:: That**

- a) the report be noted and the Chairman write to Mr R Hollis and pupils at St Pauls CE Primary; Ms K Mayglothling and Mrs A Daniels to thank them for their excellent contribution to the Conference.**

- b) The Consultant for RE and volunteers consider a possible theme/format for next years conference and report to the next meeting.**

**26. FEEDBACK FROM THE NASACRE MEETING 22ND OCTOBER 2008**

The Consultant for RE provided feedback on her attendance at the NASACRE meeting held 22 October 2008.

The Consultant for RE reported that the government funded NASACRE project to recruit and train new SACRE members was now underway. Part of the project is a free one day conference in each of the regions (4th February 2009 in Birmingham) targeted at new or inexperienced SACRE recruits. She suggested that Mrs G Jutle (Sikh representative on Committee A) be offered the opportunity to attend. While the conference was free, travelling expenses may be incurred by SACRE.

**RESOLVED: That the Consultant for RE invite Mrs Jutle to attend the one day conference in Birmingham.**

**27. SECONDARY CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

SACRE received an update on issues arising from the Secondary Curriculum Development.

The Consultant for RE reported that the curriculum had started life in schools in September 2008. Following good levels of interest at the SACRE Annual Conference Peter Bowen had undertaken to organise a local meeting for the secondary sector teachers which would provide an opportunity to share ideas and move the development forward. At the time of this meeting it was understood that no date had so far been set.

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

**28. RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF NEW SACRE MEMBERS**

This matter was considered under Minute No 26 – Feedback from the NASACRE Meeting 22 October 2008.

**29. DRAFT HEREFORDSHIRE SACRE ANNUAL REPORT - ACADEMIC YEAR  
2007/2008**

SACRE considered and commented on the draft SACRE Annual Report for the academic year September 2007 to July 2008 prior to submission to QCA.

The Democratic Services Officer presented the draft Annual report, copies of which had been circulated with the agenda to Members. He reported that following a pilot by QCA and receipt of guidance, this years report now followed the new question and answer format. He further reported that the RE examination statistics and appropriate comments arising from the earlier agenda item would be included in the report.

SACRE offered the following comments or thoughts for inclusion in the 'Summary' section:

- Greater emphasis should be given to the excellent work undertaken on the Multi-faith event and Finding Treasure publication.
- That the Multi-faith event, the Annual Conference; the work done with limited resources and the excellent work in schools be highlighted as areas of good

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- practice.
- That SACRE meetings are held in a generous, respectful and inclusive atmosphere.
  - If the DCSF were to consider changing its advice then SACRE wished to ensure that: RE remained at the heart of the curriculum and SACRE had the means to undertake the statutory role of monitoring RE and CW.

While debating the work of SACRE views were expressed that further consideration should be given to the style of the meetings namely that written reports should be in the agenda for Members to read prior to the meeting and the meeting should then focus on debating/ questioning the reports. It was suggested that Members should have more of an opportunity to meet informally (a social event) and have informal meetings with various other faiths. It was also suggested that the Chief Executive; Leader of the Council or Cabinet Members should be invited to specific meetings so that they can be made aware of local and national RE issues, the local enthusiasm for RE and the work of SACRE.

**RESOLVED: That**

- a) **Subject to the comments indicated above being translated into the Annual Report the report be approved for submission to QCA; and**
- b) **The Chairman, Lead Officer and Clerk consider the future format of SACRE meetings.**
- c) **The Chairman consider inviting the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council or Cabinet Members to appropriate meetings.**

**30. HEREFORDSHIRE RE IN RE TODAY**

SACRE noted the article on the Multi-faith event published in the Autumn edition of REtoday and mentioned earlier at minute No. 20.

**31. NEXT MEETING DATE**

SACRE noted that date; time and venue of the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 4.12 p.m.

**CHAIRMAN**

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