

AGENDA

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Date: **Monday 5 July 2010**

Time: **2.00 pm**

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

Membership

Chairman	Councillor J Stone	
Vice-Chairman		
	Councillor WU Attfield	The Local Authority
	Mrs. C. Ault	Bahai faith
	Mrs L Barker	Secondary Teachers
	Revd. P. Barlow	Church of England
	Mr. P. Bowen	Church of England
	Mrs. J. Brown	Special Education Schools
	Councillor Brig P Jones CBE	The Local Authority
	Mrs Gurmit Jutle	Sikh Faith
	Mr T Leach	Church of England
	Mrs S McCamley	Primary Schools
	Sr. D. O'Donnell	Roman Catholic Church
	Mr. Z. Pandor	Muslim Faith
	Rev L Rickards	The Free Church from Churches Together
	Ms C Wolfe	Jewish Faith
Non Voting	Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins	Co-opted member
	Mrs A. Daniel	Co-opted Member
	Ms. K. Mayglothling	Co-Opted Member
	Mrs. G. Morris	Co-Opted Member for the Academic Community

GUIDANCE ON DECLARING PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS AT MEETINGS

The Council's Members' Code of Conduct requires Councillors to declare against an Agenda item(s) the nature of an interest and whether the interest is personal or prejudicial. Councillors have to decide first whether or not they have a personal interest in the matter under discussion. They will then have to decide whether that personal interest is also prejudicial.

A personal interest is an interest that affects the Councillor more than most other people in the area. People in the area include those who live, work or have property in the area of the Council. Councillors will also have a personal interest if their partner, relative or a close friend, or an organisation that they or the member works for, is affected more than other people in the area. If they do have a personal interest, they must declare it but can stay and take part and vote in the meeting.

Whether an interest is prejudicial is a matter of judgement for each Councillor. What Councillors have to do is ask themselves whether a member of the public – if he or she knew all the facts – would think that the Councillor's interest was so important that their decision would be affected by it. If a Councillor has a prejudicial interest then they must declare what that interest is. A Councillor who has declared a prejudicial interest at a meeting may nevertheless be able to address that meeting, but only in circumstances where an ordinary member of the public would be also allowed to speak. In such circumstances, the Councillor concerned will have the same opportunity to address the meeting and on the same terms. However, a Councillor exercising their ability to speak in these circumstances must leave the meeting immediately after they have spoken.

AGENDA

	Pages
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive apologies for absence.	
2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY) To receive details any details of Members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Member of the Committee.	
3. MINUTES To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2010.	1 - 4
4. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY) To answer any pre-received written questions from members of the public.	
5. SACRE MEMBERSHIP To consider the membership of SACRE.	
6. SACRE ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2010 - UPDATE To receive an update on the organisation of the SACRE Annual Conference 2010.	
7. OFSTED PUBLICATION 'TRANSFORMING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION' To bring to SACREs attention the publication by Ofsted 'Transforming Religious Education'	5 - 14

HEREFORDSHIRE 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 15 March 2010 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor J Stone (Chairman)

Councillor WU Attfield, Mrs C Ault, Mrs L Barker, Revd. P. Barlow, Mr. P. Bowen, Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins, Mrs A Daniel, Ms T Gregory, Councillor Brig P Jones CBE, Mrs G Jutle, Ms. K. Mayclothling, Mrs S McCamley, Sr. D. O'Donnell and Mr Z Pandor

In attendance: Councillor WLS Bowen (Chairman - Children's Services Scrutiny Committee)

26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mrs J Brown, Mr T Leach and Ms C Wolfe.

The Democratic Services Officer reported that Mrs J Brown had resigned from SACRE for personal reasons. SACRE thanked Mrs Brown for her valued contribution to Religious Education in the County and to the work of SACRE and wished her well for the future.

The Chairman reported that Mrs Bridget Knight, former Lead Officer to SACRE, had taken up a secondment post with QCDA. The Chairman welcomed Mrs Vicky Ward, General Inspector who would be the Interim Lead Officer.

27. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Ms T Gregory substituted for Mr T Leach.

28. MINUTES

The Democratic Services Officer requested that in Minute 24 the words 'County Cohesion Inspector' be deleted and substituted by 'Schools Improvement Inspector'.

RESOLVED: That subject to making the above change the minutes of the meeting held 1 December 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

29. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No written questions were received.

30. SACRE BUDGET

SACRE were informed of its budget position.

The Chairman and the Interim Lead Officer (Vicky Ward, General Inspector) informed SACRE that the base budget figure for 2009/10 would be reflected in the 2010/11 budget. However, it had been acknowledged by the Local Authority that this figure did not take account of the additional work needed in producing the Agreed Syllabus, being undertaken by the Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus Conference. The Interim Lead Officer reported that

while Local Authority budgets were facing pressures, limited finance would be found in 2010/11 to enable the work to continue on producing a revised Agreed Syllabus. Expenditure incurred in publishing the Syllabus and training for teachers would fall in the 2011/12 financial year and therefore there was time to make appropriate budgetary arrangements.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

31. 2010 SACRE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

SACRE considered whether to host a 2010 SACRE Annual Conference.

The Consultant for RE (Mrs J Mackley) reported that in the interests of continuing the Conference she had consulted her colleagues at RE Today who had generously agreed to run workshops at the Conference. She had prepared a proposed programme for consideration working on the theme; Better RE: Developing cohesion, thinking and linking. In view of earlier discussion regarding budgets she highlighted that while the Annual Conference sought to be self financing, there was an element of financial risk concerning covering the cost of hiring a venue and this would have to be underwritten by the Local Authority. A degree of administrative work would also need to be undertaken.

SACRE thanked the Consultant for RE (J Mackley) and her colleagues for their offer and noting the intention to hold the Conference at Belmont, it was suggested that either buildings at the old Minster College, Leominster or The Palace, Hereford could be considered as possible alternative venues.

Comment was made that last years 'pay for one delegate and get one place free' initiative seemed to have worked well and this could be considered again for this year. A suggestion was made that places could also be open to delegates from neighbouring Counties.

Of the two suggested dates for holding the Conference (23rd or 30th September) Members favoured the 30th September.

The Interim Lead Officer strongly emphasised that the Conference had to be self financing and that information would have to be sent to schools earlier than in previous years. This was so that actual attendance numbers could be ascertained by the end of June and a decision made on whether it was viable to run the Conference.

RESOLVED: that

- a. the Interim Lead Officer be requested to put in place arrangements for a 2010 SACRE Annual Conference based on the proposed programme now considered; and**
- b. when confirmed attendance numbers were known and following consultation with the Chairman the Interim Lead Officer be authorised to consider the viability of running the Conference.**

32. RE IN THE PRIMARY CURRICULUM

SACRE noted the publication of 'RE in the Primary Curriculum' which included the RE Programme of Learning.

The Democratic Services Officer reported that following consultation during summer 2009 the QCDA had recently published 'RE in the Primary Curriculum' which included the RE Programme of Learning. He also reported that the February 'Update' from

QCDA indicated that further guidance on implementing the new primary curriculum would be issued on 29 March 2010.

The Consultant for RE (JM) reported that many of the issues raised by SACRE when it had considered and responded to the draft had not been incorporated into the final version. She considered that the statement 'A statutory subject supported by a non-statutory programme of learning' would still be confusing for practitioners. It was suggested that a letter be sent to all primary schools clearly setting out Religious Educations' position in the school curriculum. She acknowledged that the final document now gave more prominence to RE in that it was identifiable under its own section tab.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and a letter be sent to all primary schools clearly setting out Religious Educations' position in the school curriculum.

33. RE NON-STATUTORY GUIDANCE 2010

SACRE noted the publication of 'Religious education in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010'.

The Democratic Services Officer reported that following consultation during summer 2009 the DCSF had now published its 'Religious education in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010'. Copies of the publication had previously been issued to Members and were available to download from www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications (ref DCSF-00114-2010). He reported that the guidance replaced the RE elements of Circular 1/94 and it was understood that the Collective Worship elements would be revised in due course. The new guidance provided an indication of the wide range of work SACRE could undertake if it had the resources. No change had been made to the legal standing of either SACRE or the Agreed Syllabus Conference.

SACRE noted that the guidance was also intended for governors, headteachers, curriculum planners and teachers as it also provided a background to RE in the curriculum.

RESOLVED: That the guidance be noted.

34. NEWS FROM NASACRE

SACRE noted details of the 2010 NASACRE Annual Conference and that March 2011 will mark the national month of celebration for RE.

The Consultant for RE (Mrs J Mackley) also informed SACRE that the QCDA would be holding a conference on 24 March in London on 'RE in the Primary Curriculum'. While this was a free conference travel expenses would need to be considered.

While both conferences were of interest to SACRE, particularly the one organised by the QCDA, SACRE noted the budget position. It was hoped that reports of the conferences could be obtained in due course.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

35. FUTURE MEETING DATES

SACRE noted the future meeting dates.

36. MRS J MACKLEY - RE CONSULTANT

The Chairman reported that Mrs Joyce Mackley, Religious Education Consultant, would be retiring at the end of March 2010. Mrs Mackley had been the RE Consultant to SACRE since 1st October 1998, and on behalf of SACRE the Chairman thanked her for her valued advice and support to SACRE over the years. He also acknowledged her involvement in establishing the Multi-faith Conferences.

The Chairman also thanked Mrs Mackley for her advice to the Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus Conference, and in particular her work in drafting the RE Syllabuses, which had made a major contribution to the teaching of Religious Education in the County.

The Chairman presented Mrs Mackley with a bouquet of flowers, retirement gift and a card signed by the Members in attendance and wished her a long and happy retirement.

The meeting ended at 2.35 pm

CHAIRMAN

OFSTED PUBLICATION 'TRANSFORMING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION'

Report By: Clerk to SACRE

Purpose

To bring to SACREs attention the publication by Ofsted 'Transforming Religious Education'.

Background

1. On 6th June 2010 OfSTED published their report 'Transforming Religious Education' The OfSTED website states that:

'Ofsted's latest survey on religious education finds that in many of the schools visited RE was no better than satisfactory, and in some cases inadequate, because teachers are unsure about what they are trying to achieve in the subject.

The survey showed that because the curriculum for RE is determined locally, there is wide variability in the quantity and quality of support provided to schools by local authorities and relevant advisory councils.

There were a number of specific concerns about the teaching of religious belief, and many schools visited did not pay sufficient attention to teaching the core beliefs of Christianity.

Despite these weaknesses, the report *Transforming religious education* says that a major success in the teaching of religious education in both primary and secondary schools is the way it supports the appreciation and understanding of different values by pupils.

2. An extract from the report is attached for Members convenience. The full report can be seen at

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Transforming-religious-education>

3. At the meeting the RE Consultant will comment on any key points arising for SACRE and the Agreed Syllabus Conference.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT SACRE notes the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.

Transforming religious education

Religious education in schools 2006–09

This report evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of religious education (RE) in primary and secondary schools and discusses the key issues at the heart of RE teaching today. It is based principally on evidence from visits to 94 primary and 89 secondary schools in England between 2006 and 2009. The sample of schools represented a cross-section, including voluntary controlled schools, but did not include voluntary aided schools, for which there are separate inspection arrangements. The report builds on the findings of an earlier report, *Making sense of religion*.

Age group: 4–18

Published: June 2010

Reference no: 090215

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Executive summary

The past three years have seen significant changes and developments in the world of religious education (RE). The recent implementation by the former Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) of an action plan for RE has provided opportunities to strengthen support for the subject. The emphasis on promoting community cohesion has given added importance to RE within the curriculum. However, despite the very considerable commitment and energy which many teachers bring to the subject, in many of the schools visited the provision was no better than satisfactory quality, or in some cases inadequate, and the effectiveness of much of the RE observed was not good enough.

There is an urgent need to review the way in which the subject is supported at a number of levels. Among the questions to be considered are: whether the current statutory arrangements for the local determination of the RE curriculum are effective; whether there is sufficient clarity about what constitutes learning in RE and how pupil progress can be measured; and whether the provision for professional development in RE is adequate.

The quality of RE in the sample of primary schools was broadly the same as that reported in 2007 and not enough was of good quality. In schools where achievement was satisfactory, several key weaknesses were common which inhibited pupils' learning. Most notably, the pattern of curriculum delivery of the subject often limited the opportunities for sustained learning in RE. Schools visited took the subject seriously but, in too many cases, teachers lacked the knowledge and confidence to plan and teach high quality RE lessons.

The quality of RE in the secondary schools visited was worse than in the schools involved in the 2007 survey. The proportion of schools where RE was inadequate was considerably higher than previously. Among the factors which detracted from the quality of the provision were the impact on RE of the recent changes to the wider curriculum, particularly at Key Stage 3, and weaknesses in the quality of learning in much of the provision for the short course GCSE in religious studies.

There are also positive developments. Examination entries in religious studies at GCSE and GCE A level have continued to rise each year since 2006, reinforcing a key success of the subject in recent years. Results in the full course GCSE are rising, although for the short course GCSE the results show only limited improvement, with around 50% to 55% of those entered gaining the higher A* to C grades. Results at GCE A and AS level have remained broadly the same since 2006.

As reported in 2007, a key success of RE in the past decade has been the improvement in pupils' attitudes towards the subject. In most of the schools visited, pupils clearly understood the importance of learning about the

diversity of religion and belief in contemporary society. Where pupils expressed more negative attitudes towards diversity, the RE provision was often inadequate and included few opportunities for them to develop an understanding of the beliefs and ways of life of others.

Section B of the report explores some of the issues arising from the survey findings. Although progress has been made in recent years in establishing greater clarity about the nature of RE, there are still serious areas of uncertainty about the subject which often inhibit teachers' ability to plan, teach and assess RE effectively, and undermine pupils' progress. A number of developments, including new programmes of study for RE by the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency which built on the publication in 2004 of the non-statutory national framework for RE, and the recent publication by the former DCSF of updated national guidance on RE, have gone some way to deal with some of these concerns.

However, the inspection evidence indicates that further work needs to be done to develop these initiatives further and to ensure that their impact in the classroom is more effective. In particular, more work needs to be done to clarify the place and use of concepts in RE and to define progression in pupils' learning more effectively. This report includes a consideration of the way in which a stronger role for enquiry in the teaching of RE could help address some of these issues.

A major success of RE is the way that it supports the promotion of community cohesion. In many schools RE plays a major role in helping pupils understand diversity and develop respect for the beliefs and cultures of others. Inspectors found a number of outstanding examples of good practice. There is scope to develop this contribution further by extending the use of local religious and belief communities in RE and ensuring that the changing nature of religion and belief in the contemporary world is reflected more strongly in the RE curriculum.

Previous Ofsted reports have raised the question of the effectiveness of the statutory arrangements in supporting the promotion of high quality RE. The current round of inspections has highlighted this issue again. There is still very significant variability in the quantity and quality of support for RE provided to schools by local authorities and Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education. Many schools have difficulty finding effective training in RE at local level in order to support implementation of the locally agreed syllabus. This report concludes that a review is needed to determine whether the statutory arrangements for the local determination of the RE curriculum which underpin the subject should be revised or whether ways can be found to improve their effectiveness.

Key findings

- Pupils' achievement in RE in the 94 primary schools visited was broadly similar to that reported in 2007. It was good or outstanding in four out of 10 schools and was inadequate in only one school.
- Students' achievement in RE in the secondary schools visited showed a very mixed picture. It was good or outstanding in 40 of the 89 schools visited but was inadequate in 14 schools.
- There has been a continuing rise in the numbers taking GCSE and A- and AS-level examinations in RE. Some concerns remain, however, about the quality of much of the learning that takes place in GCSE short courses.
- Most of the secondary schools in the survey with sixth forms did not fully meet the statutory requirement to provide core RE for all students beyond the age of 16.
- RE made a positive contribution to key aspects of pupils' personal development, most notably in relation to the understanding and appreciation of the diverse nature of our society. However, the subject's contribution to promoting pupils' spiritual development was often limited.
- The contribution of RE to the promotion of community cohesion was a strength of the subject in most of the schools visited. However, there is scope to extend the opportunities within the curriculum to enrich pupils' learning through greater use of fieldwork and contacts with religious and belief groups in the local community.
- There is uncertainty among many teachers of RE about what they are trying to achieve in the subject resulting in a lack of well-structured and sequenced teaching and learning, substantial weaknesses in the quality of assessment and a limited use of higher order thinking skills to promote greater challenge.
- Where RE was most effective, it used a range of enquiry skills such as investigation, interpretation, analysis, evaluation and reflection. However, this use is not yet defined clearly enough or integrated effectively within guidance to schools and, as a result, is not embedded sufficiently into classroom practice.
- There were a number of specific weaknesses in the teaching about Christianity. Many primary and secondary schools visited did not pay sufficient attention to the progressive and systematic investigation of the core beliefs of Christianity.
- There were significant inconsistencies in the way humanism and other non-religious beliefs were taught, and some uncertainties about the relationship between fostering respect for pupils' beliefs and encouraging open, critical, investigative learning in RE.
- The reliance on a narrow curriculum model in primary schools based on RE being delivered in half-termly units taught weekly, often inhibited

sustained learning in the subject and limited the opportunities to link the subject to other areas of the curriculum.

- The revised Key Stage 3 secondary curriculum, introduced in September 2008, was having a negative impact on RE provision in about a third of the 30 secondary schools surveyed in 2008–09, particularly in Year 7. Too often the impact of these changes was not being monitored effectively.
- There was often a lack of continuity and progression between the RE curriculum in Key Stage 3 and the GCSE short courses. In the worst cases, this lack of continuity distorted pupils' understanding of religion and belief.
- The effectiveness of specialist staff training in RE was inadequate in four out of 10 of the schools visited. They were not giving sufficient time and resources to support teachers' professional development in the subject.
- The effectiveness of local arrangements to support RE varied too much and many local authorities did not ensure that their Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education had sufficient capacity to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.

Recommendations

The Department for Education should, along with the relevant delivery partners:

- carry out a review of the current statutory arrangements for the local determination of the RE curriculum, to ensure that these provide the best means of promoting the high quality and consistency of RE in schools
- establish stronger mechanisms for supporting and holding to account the work of local authorities, Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education, and Agreed Syllabus Conferences in relation to RE.
- establish clearer national guidance for Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education and Agreed Syllabus Conferences about the nature and use of key concepts in RE, the definition of progression, and the use of enquiry skills in RE in the design of agreed syllabuses
- provide more guidance on teaching about Christianity and non-religious world views, and effective ways of balancing the need to foster respect for pupils' religions and beliefs with the promotion of open, critical, investigative learning in RE.

The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (OfQual) should:

- review, and as necessary adjust, the short course GCSE specifications in religious studies to ensure that they are securing a stronger focus on extending students' ability to understand the place of religion and belief in contemporary society.

Local authorities, in partnership with their Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education and Agreed Syllabus Conferences, should:

- ensure that the work of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education and Agreed Syllabus Conferences has good access to subject expertise to enable them to support schools effectively in promoting high quality RE
- ensure that high quality professional development in RE is available to their schools and encourage them to make the most of these opportunities to improve the quality of RE teaching
- ensure that agreed syllabuses and related advice:
 - offer guidance about the systematic use of enquiry skills in RE to enable schools to plan the subject in a more coherent and rigorous way
 - provide greater clarity about the use of key concepts and the definition of progression in RE
 - include guidance to schools about ways of incorporating RE within more innovative and creative approaches to curriculum planning.

Schools should:

- ensure that RE promotes pupils' spiritual development more effectively by allowing for more genuine investigation into, and reflection on, the implications of religion and belief for their personal lives
- make proper provision for continuing professional development for subject leaders, specialist teachers and others with responsibility for teaching RE in order to improve its quality
- provide more opportunities to use fieldwork and visitors in RE.

Primary schools should:

- ensure that the delivery of RE incorporates more sustained learning and stronger links with the wider curriculum.

Secondary schools should:

- explore the most effective ways of teaching RE in the context of revisions to the wider curriculum and monitor carefully the impact of any changes on pupils' achievement
- ensure that there is effective continuity and progression in pupils' learning especially between Key Stage 3 and GCSE provision.

