

AGENDA

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Date: **Friday 1 March 2013**

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:

Paul James, Democratic Services Officer

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If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please call Paul James, Democratic Services Officer on 01432 260460 or e-mail pjames@herefordshire.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

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

Membership

Chairman	Councillor J Stone	
Vice-Chairman		
	Councillor CNH Attwood	Local Authority
	Mrs. C. Ault	Bahai faith
	Mrs L Barker	Secondary School Teachers
	Revd. P. Barlow	Church of England
	Mr. P. Bowen	Church of England
	Mrs S Bryant	Church of England
	Councillor EMK Chave	Local Authority
	Venerable Tsuiltrim Tenzin Choesang	Buddhist
	Mrs A. Daniel	Primary School Teachers
	Miss Emilie James	Special School Teachers
	Mrs Gurmit Jutle	Sikh Faith
	Rev DT Meachem	Churches Together in Herefordshire
	Sr. D. O'Donnell	Roman Catholic Church
	Ms C Wolfe	Jewish Faith
Non Voting	Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins	Co-opted member
	Ms. K. Mayglothling	Co-Opted Member
	Miss Allyson Taylor	Co-opted Member

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
<p>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>To receive apologies for absence.</p>	
<p>2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)</p> <p>To receive details any 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 27 November 2012.</p>	1 - 6
<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. PRIMARY SCHOOL SURVEY OF RE IN HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS</p> <p>To report the results of a survey into the provision of RE in Herefordshire Schools.</p>	7 - 10
<p>6. UPDATE ON ANY NEW INITIATIVES OR NEWS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION</p> <p>To report any news or further changes to the government's education strategy that may affect the teaching of religious education in Herefordshire schools.</p>	11 - 14
<p>7. 2013 SACRE ANNUAL CONFERENCE</p> <p>To receive an update on arrangements for the 2013 SACRE Annual Conference.</p>	
<p>8. SYLLABUS TRAINING FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS - EVENT REPORT</p> <p>To report on the syllabus training event for Special Schools held October 2012.</p>	15 - 18
<p>9. 2013/14 SACRE BUDGET UPDATE</p> <p>To consider any implications arising from any changes to the 2013/14 SACRE budget.</p>	
<p>10. NASACRE AGM</p> <p>To consider whether to send a representative to the NASACRE 2013 AGM.</p>	
<p>11. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS</p> <p>To note that dates for SACRE meetings have been scheduled for 2.00pm at Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on:</p> <p>Friday 5 July 2013 Friday 29 November 2013 Friday 21 March 2014</p>	

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 Tuesday 27 November 2012 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor J Stone (Chairman)

Mrs C Ault, Mrs L Barker, Revd. P. Barlow, Mrs S Bryant, Councillor EMK Chave, Mrs G Jutle, Rev DT Meachem, Sr. D. O'Donnell and Miss A Taylor

Officers: Mrs J Tinsley; Mr S Pett; Mr P James.

120. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the Venerable Tsultrim Tenzin Choesang and Councillor CHN Attwood; Mrs A Daniel; Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins; Ms K Mayglothling, and Ms C Wolfe.

121. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

Mrs S McCamley substituted for Mr P Bowen.

122. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held 13 July 2012 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

123. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)

No written questions had been received.

124. MEMBERSHIP OF SACRE - UPDATE

SACRE received an update on its membership.

Further to the report to the July meeting the Democratic Services Officer reported that no further contact had been received from the Muslim community concerning a nomination to the current vacancy.

The Democratic Services Officer also reported that in accordance with the July meeting the Chairman had communicated SACRE's position concerning the Welsh Marches Humanists being invited to attend a meeting and the position concerning their possible membership of SACRE. The representative had responded that the Humanist position concerning membership of SACRE remained unchanged.

RESOLVED: That SACRE noted the reports.

125. RELIGIOUS STUDIES EXAMINATION RESULTS FOR 2012

SACRE considered the Religious studies examination results for 2012.

The agenda report was presented by the Lead Officer to SACRE who highlighted that the full course GCSE results were still above the national average; the short course at GCSE A*-C were below national average and that within the cohort taking Religious Studies at KS5 a 100% pass rate had been maintained at both A and AS level. A detailed breakdown of the results at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 had been provided with the agenda papers.

As in previous years it was difficult to establish any definite trends as firstly the data was sent by schools directly to the DfE and therefore had to be drawn down from the DfE database and that some schools had different patterns of entry from previous years.

SACRE noted that the data showed a significant increased entry to Theology at the Hereford Sixth Form College, however, the data would need further examination.

It was noted that different points values were attached to different levels of courses.

There was evidence nationally to show that in some schools the time allowance for teaching RE was being significantly reduced and that this may relate to the impact of the EBac upon RE. SACRE was concerned that any reduction in RE teaching time would affect the quality of the learning experience.

While approximately 55% of students were entered for some form of course, SACRE noted that this inferred that there were approximately 45% that hadn't been entered on a course. It was however acknowledged that an element of learning may be derived through other courses e.g. citizenship.

A view was expressed that it would be useful to see whether any trends were being established and how individual schools in the county were performing.

RESOLVED: That the Religious Studies examination results for 2012 be noted.

126. 2013 SACRE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Arrangements for the 2013 SACRE Annual Conference were considered.

The Consultant for RE circulated an outline programme for the 2013 Annual Conference and reported that Whitecross Hereford High School and Sports College had agreed to provide the venue. The theme would be 'Making Good Progress in RE: deepening understanding and developing skills. Lat Blaylock and Stephen Pett had agreed to deliver the key sessions, however, volunteers from SACRE were invited to take part in the 'Grill a SACRE rep' sessions. Bookings would be via RE Today at £75 per person.

The Chairman thanked the Consultant for RE for putting together yet another interesting programme for the conference and encouraged bookings to be made early to ensure that the Conference could go ahead.

Members questioned whether any discounts would be available e.g. book two places get one free or a discount for early booking. The Consultant for RE undertook to investigate whether this would be financially feasible.

The Lead Officer to SACRE reported that the Conference would be widely advertised as soon as possible and this may include inviting SACREs from Shropshire or neighbours in Wales. School Governors would also be invited.

RESOLVED: that progress with the SACRE Annual Conference 2013 and the Conference Programme be approved.

127. UPDATE ON ANY NEW INITIATIVES OR NEWS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SACRE were informed of news or further changes to the government's education strategy effecting religious education.

The Consultant for RE presented the agenda papers and highlighted that:

- The NATRE report on the impact of English Baccalaureate (EBac) on RE had been published and in his opinion didn't make very good reading as it indicated a decline in RE teaching since the introduction of the EBac. It was probable that the general position outlined in the report was reflected in Herefordshire schools.
- The DfE report on the impact of the English Baccalaureate contained some positive comments from teachers of RE about the subject which had been acknowledged by the DfE.
- The DfE were cutting back on the bursaries for post graduate teacher training. RE was not the only subject to be excluded from the bursaries with Art, Citizenship and Design and Technology also being excluded.
- He encouraged schools to enter for the 2013 Hockerill/NATRE Prize for Innovation in RE.
- He also encouraged both primary and secondary schools to apply for the RE quality mark.

The 'RE Council RE subject review the Phase 1 report' had been published and had been included in the agenda papers. The Consultant for RE referred to the executive summary and encouraged members to read the report and respond directly. The Consultant for RE reported that this was a report on the first part of the parallel review (the DfE were also reviewing the subject) which attempted to: set out the aims of the RE community; define the levels of core knowledge and establish what good RE looked like.

SACRE briefly debated whether the report adequately defined Religious Education, how RE could tackle social problems, whether the report should include reference to God and whether school mission statements were linked in any way to RE.

On questioning the consequences to schools of not providing RE the Lead Officer responded that the Ofsted schools inspection team had to seek evidence of its teaching. Previously Ofsted had to undertake subject reviews but following the cuts in their inspection regime the subject wasn't necessarily investigated. However, if a school was found to be lacking in this area of teaching then it would be reported under the 'Leadership & Management of the School' section of the inspection report and would probably result in a follow up inspection of the school.

It was noted that academies were free to set their own syllabus providing it covered a broad and balanced teaching of all subjects.

RESOLVED: that the report on RE issues be noted and Members be encouraged to individually respond to the RE Council RE subject review the Phase 1 report.

128. SACRE ANNUAL SURVEY OF SCHOOLS

SACRE were invited to consider the contents of the 2012 Annual SACRE Survey of Primary Schools.

The Lead Officer to SACRE reported that in 2011 the local authority undertook a limited survey of RE in primary schools, the results of which had been reported to SACRE earlier in the year and were contained in the SACRE Annual Report. Building on the results of that survey and picking up on the request by SACRE to include questions on Collective Worship, a set of questions for the 2012 survey had been compiled and circulated in the agenda.

The Consultant for RE reported that last year 81% of Primary and 66% of Secondary schools had responded. While the agenda version was for primary schools a secondary schools version would be produced. It was intended to issue both early in the New Year with a three week response period and report the findings to the March SACRE meeting.

It was suggested that questions on resources and budget may provide interesting feedback.

It was noted that generally the feedback could be useful in providing direction to future SACRE Annual Conferences.

RESOLVED: That the content of the SACRE Annual Survey of Schools be approved.

129. SYLLABUS TRAINING FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS

SACRE were informed of the outcomes from the training event for special schools held jointly with Gloucestershire SACRE.

The Consultant for RE reported that a joint training event had been held with Gloucestershire SACRE. The event entitled 'RE in special schools: promoting spiritual development' had been held on 16 October 2012. Twelve delegates attended from schools across both counties. The post event evaluation indicated a very positive response to both the event and venue and provided valuable feedback on how the day's learning would be translated into the school setting.

Delegates had particularly appreciated the opportunity to meet and share ideas/resources on a subject specific to them.

The Lead Officer to SACRE reported that this had been a good collaborative event and suggested that some of the learning could have been translated to primary 'P' level pupils, SEN or under achieving students.

Responding to whether the event would be repeated next year the Consultant for RE responded that that would be heavily dependent on finance being available.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

130. SACRE ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2011/12

SACRE considered the draft SACRE Annual Report for the academic year September 2011 to July 2012.

The Democratic Services Officer presented the draft for consideration, copies having been previously been circulated to members, and highlighted that the examination statistics discussed earlier in the meeting, together with any comment made would be added to the report.

RESOLVED: That subject to the inclusion of the examination results and final proof reading the Annual report was approved.

131. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

SACRE noted that the next meeting is scheduled to be held at 2.00pm on Friday 1st March 2013 at Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford.

132. URGENT ITEM - SACRE BUDGET 2013/14

The Chairman reported that since publication of the agenda information had come to light concerning the 2013/14 SACRE budget which he considered needed to be discussed before the end of December.

The Chairman invited the Consultant for RE to outline the statutory position concerning both RE in schools and SACRE, the benefits of having expert advice and any implications of reducing the level of that advice. Having provided a brief overview the Consultant for RE declared a pecuniary interest and left the meeting.

The Lead Officer to SACRE reported that indications had been received that the Council's budgets would again be reduced. To provide sufficient budgets to support front line services e.g. children's safeguarding, other budgets were likely to be severely reduced and this would include the SACRE budget.

The Chairman reported that the current SACRE budget was £11,750 of which £10,500 was used to fund 20 days of consultancy work. Unlike in some local authorities no technical RE input was provided in-house. The remaining £1,250 supported printing & refreshments for teacher training twilight sessions, the NASACRE annual conference attendance and subscription.

SACRE debated the key areas of its budget expenditure and noted that the Annual Conference, which was now run by RE Today, should not be affected. The level of consultant support to schools and to SACRE which was currently contracted until 31 March 2013, may have to be severely reduced. SACRE noted that there needed to be a balance between the principal objective of supporting teachers and supporting the work of SACRE. In response to a suggestion that a breakdown of the Consultants time be obtained the Lead Officer assured SACRE that she had a detailed breakdown and highlighted that in relation to his support to teacher twilight sessions, while preparatory work had been undertaken, one session had not taken place due to lack of support.

SACRE noted that the resources provided by the Lead Officer and the Democratic Services Officer were not included in the SACRE budget. However it was likely that these would also be reduced.

It was also noted that the next review of the RE Agreed Syllabus would commence during the 2013/14 budget period and this of necessity entailed extra work.

The Chairman suggested that authority be given for both he and the Lead Officer to SACRE to meet with the Cabinet Member (Education and Infrastructure) and the Director for Peoples Services to put the case for maintaining the SACRE budget whereupon it was proposed and seconded that:

RESOLVED: That the Chairman and the Lead Officer to SACRE be authorised to meet with the Cabinet Member (Education and Infrastructure) and the Director for Peoples Services to discuss maintaining the budget position for SACRE.

The meeting ended at 3.54 pm

CHAIRMAN

SACRE

1 MARCH 2013

PRIMARY SCHOOL SURVEY OF RE IN HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS

Report By: Stephen Pett, Advisor to Herefordshire SACRE

Purpose

1. To report the results of a survey into the provision of RE in Herefordshire Schools.

Primary survey:

19/80 schools completed the survey 24% (2012: 65/80 schools completed the survey 81%)

NB: % data for number of schools varies as some schools skipped some questions.

Type of School:

- 8 schools identified as LA community schools; 2 academies; 4 VA schools; 2 VC schools.

Headline results:

- The vast majority of RE is delivered through discrete lessons, although almost all schools use a combination of methods of delivery.
 - 2 schools (11%) teach discrete RE throughout the school (54%)
 - No schools teach cross-curricular RE throughout the school (3%)
 - 3 schools (16%) use RE-led project weeks, but only 1 school uses this as the only method of delivery for RE (except Foundation Stage)
 - 5 schools (26%) use off-timetable days as part of their RE, in combination with other methods.
- Most schools have around an hour per week (or equivalent) for their RE.
 - 4 schools have less than an hour per week at KS1
 - 3 schools have more than an hour per week at upper KS2
- RE is mostly taught by the class teacher
 - 7 schools (39%) only use class teacher (48%)
 - 11 schools (61%) use the class teacher plus either head teacher, PPA or HLTA (47%)
 - 5 schools (28%) use class teacher and PPA; 4 schools (22%) use class teacher and HT; 2 schools (11%) use class teacher and HLTA.
- Many schools use a combination of class teacher plus head teacher, PPA teacher(s) and/or HLTAs
 - In 4 schools (22%), the head teacher teaches some RE (26%)
 - In 2 schools (11%), HLTAs are involved in teaching RE (14%)
 - In 5 schools (28%), PPA teachers are involved in teaching RE (18%).
- No schools only use HLTAs or PPA to teach all the RE in the school. This is the same as last year.

Comment:

The shift away from all RE being taught only by class teachers is significant, with an increase in diversity of provision.

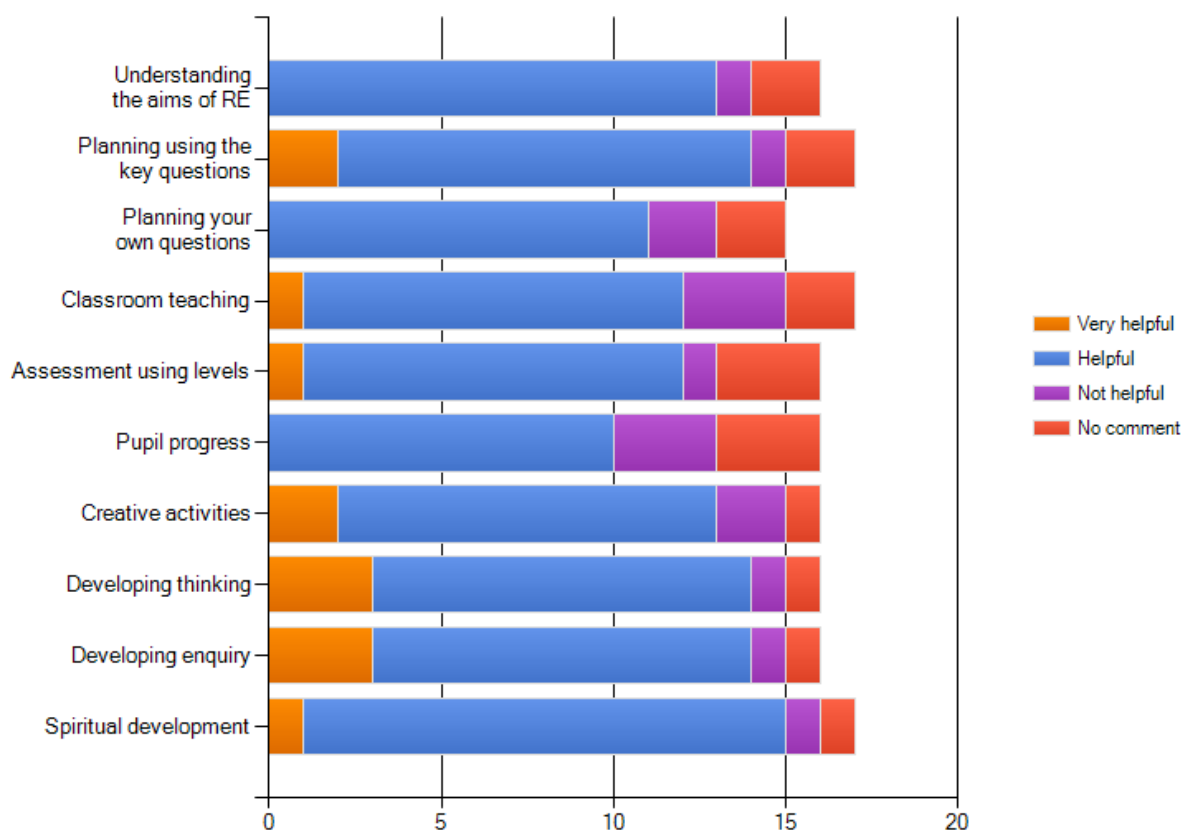
There is no correlation between mixture of teacher/HT/PPA/HLTA and delivery – ie schools with RE days or weeks do not all have the HT involved in RE; discrete lessons and cross curricular RE are taught by the teacher, HT, PPA and HLTA.

Agreed syllabus:

- Confidence in implementing the revised Agreed Syllabus is slightly lower than 2012.

- No schools were very confident (9%)
 - 15 schools (83%) were confident or confident in aspects (71%)
 - 2 schools (11%) were unsure in aspects (18%)
 - 1 school (6%) was not confident (2%)
- Implementation has moved on a little
 - 6 schools (33%) have fully implemented the syllabus (23%)
 - 11 schools (61%) have partially implemented (62%)
 - 1 school (6%) has many aspects still to implement (15%)
- Schools are finding many aspects of the syllabus helpful or very helpful.

Are there particular areas of your RE provision that have been enhanced by the revised agreed syllabus? (Select more than one as appropriate)

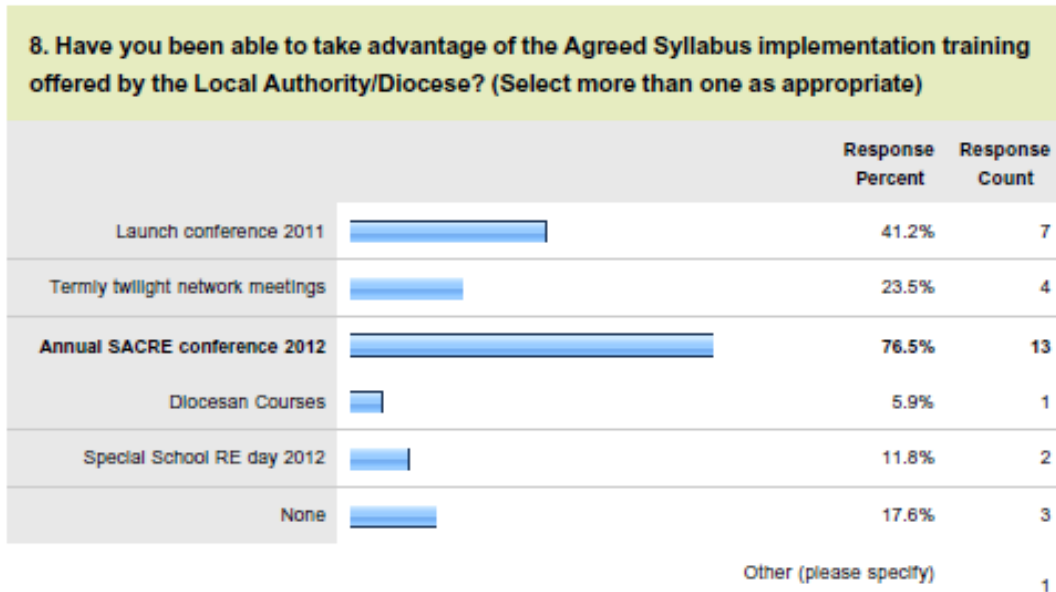


Comment:

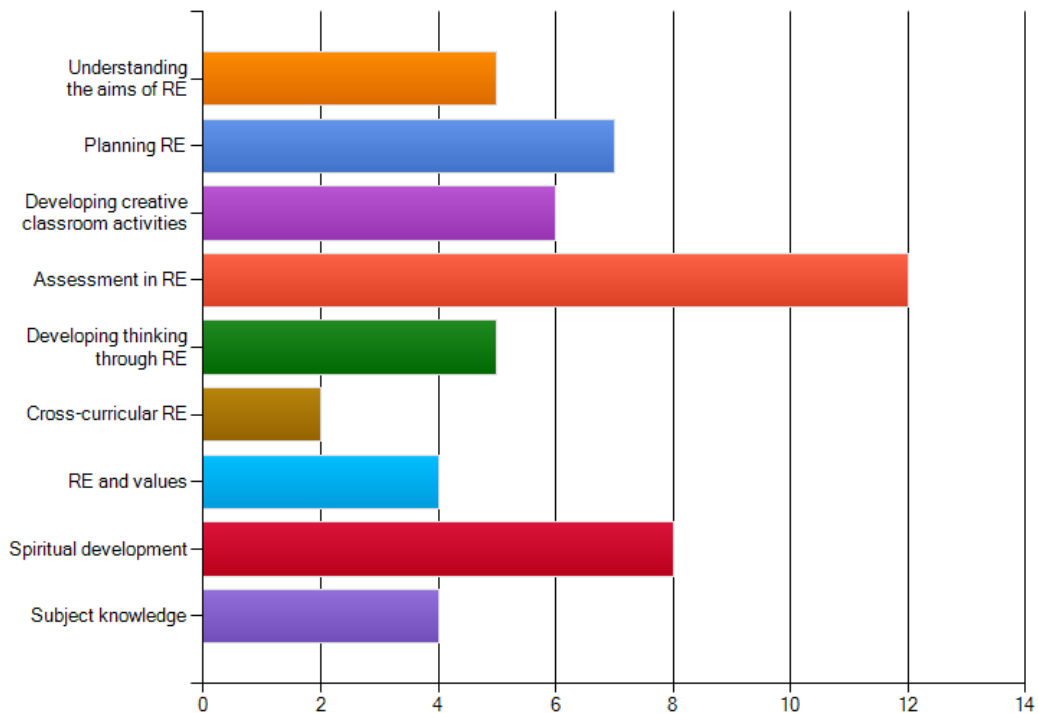
- It is difficult to assess what the answer 'not helpful' signifies in reality.
- Of the 3 schools who are lacking in confidence with implementing the Agreed Syllabus, 2 have not attended any of the support from SACRE, including the launch of the syllabus.
- One school 'unsure in aspects' of implementation is willing to be contacted about this.
- One school is not confident, has partially implemented the syllabus, put 'not helpful' for the first 7 categories above, and helpful for the last three. They are not willing to be contacted!
- The one school who is unsure in aspects and with many aspects still to implement has not left the name or contact details. They put 'no comment' for the above question.
- This suggests that the syllabus is not sufficient for schools to access without support, despite our attempts to make it so. It also shows the need for schools to take up the opportunities for support.

SACRE support:

- The majority of respondents have taken advantage of some of the support offered by SACRE in the last couple of years. 'Other' here was 'email support from adviser'.



What are the key training needs for teachers of RE in your school? (Tick more than one option as appropriate)

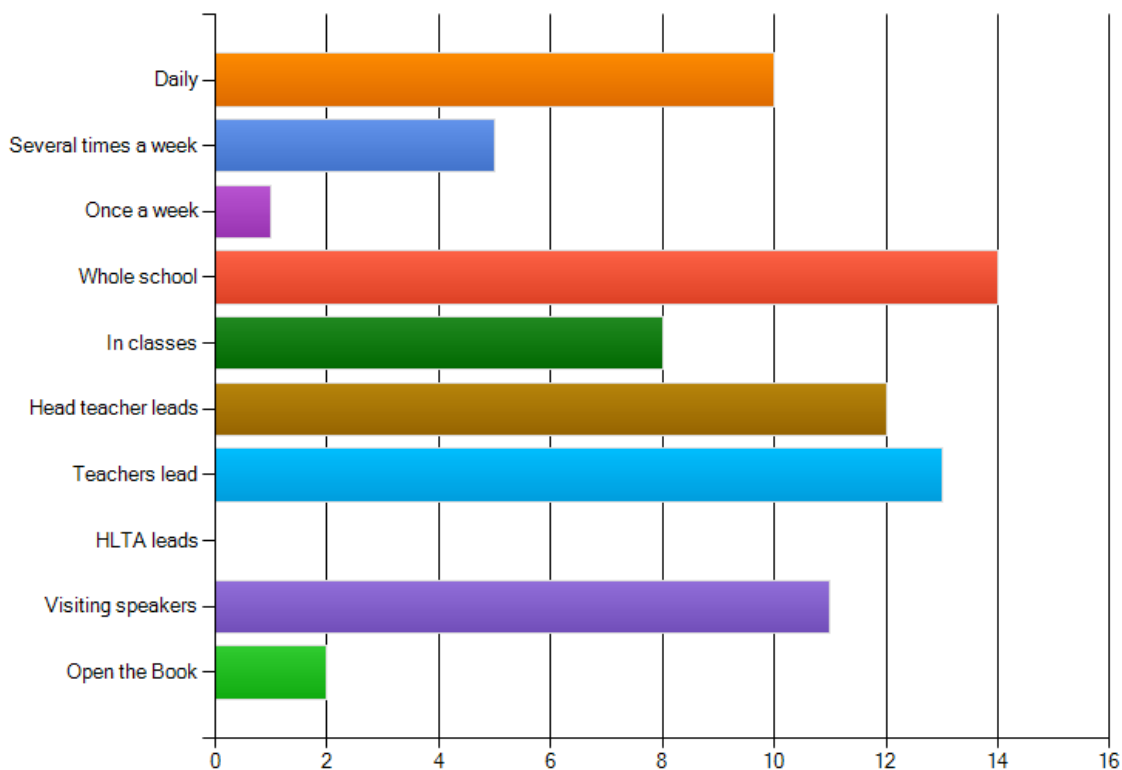


Good or excellent practice:

- 5 schools identified themselves as having good or excellent practice; of these only 2 are willing to be contacted about this.
- 12 schools are not sure about having good or excellent practice; of these, 4 are willing to be contacted.

Collective worship:

SACRE also have responsibility for supporting and monitoring collective worship. Please tell how you deliver collective worship in your school. (Select more than one, as appropriate)



- Comments on what would be most helpful support for collective worship:
 - Sharing and observing good practice and how best to engage a wide range of age groups
 - Support in learners planning and leading acts of worship
 - Provide a list of people from other faiths who would be prepared to take an assembly at special times of the year
 - Resources, training for staff and children so they can lead confidently.

Stephen Pett
Adviser to Herefordshire SACRE
20.2.13

UPDATE ON NEW INITIATIVES OR NEWS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Report By: Advisor to Herefordshire SACRE

Purpose

1. To report any news or further changes to the government's education strategy that may affect the teaching of religious education in Herefordshire schools.

Report

2. Continuing the practice of providing SACRE with news of any new initiatives the attached information is supplied. The Consultant for RE will provide further commentary at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT subject to any comments by SACRE the news be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.

MICHAEL GOVE AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: THE GOOD, BAD AND THE UGLY

GOOD

- No EBacc certificates but one qualification (reformed GCSE) for all subjects, so no first and second class qualifications
- A new broader performance measure for schools (Performance8) that allows GCSE RS to count towards school performance alongside EBacc subjects; this is good news for schools with successful GCSE provision
- RE was reaffirmed in the new National Curriculum documentation – “all state schools ... must teach RE to pupils at every key stage”
- Not mentioned on 7 February but RE now included in Specialist Leader in Education programme by National College of School Leadership

BAD

- The EBacc still exists and still excludes GCSE RS as a humanity option, despite the recent addition of Computer Science to the science suite
- The EBacc headline measure for school performance remains in place, implying second class academic status to GCSE RS (and other subjects)
- Position of GCSE RS is still precarious and depends on how Performance8 subjects will be determined; RS may lie only in an overcrowded option position, competing with provision for both EBacc and non-EBacc subjects
- The GCSE Short Course RS will not count towards school performance and its future is very uncertain – no indication of how statutory RE in Key Stage 4 can be accredited
- Not mentioned on 7 February but teacher training for RE remains in a dire state with the removal of bursaries for RE PGCE trainees (unlike nearly every other subject) being inequitable and unjustifiable

UGLY

- Some probably irreversible damage to RE has already happened, with reduced time, staffing and fewer exam entries
- ‘Bridge too far’ metaphor obscures the minimal change in Gove’s plans; sleight of hand is evident and he will not lose political credibility over any of this
- Whilst mentioning nearly every other subject, he did not mention RE at all

CONCLUSION

- RE is not out of the woods yet; or to put it another way, there are stormy times still to come for the good ship RE

John Keast
Chair, RE Council
8 February 2013

REC Review

Phase 1 report completed. Copy available from stephen@retoday.org.uk

Phase 2: Task groups

Task Group 1: to develop non-statutory guidance material on RE and its curriculum, with particular concern for its aims, its distinctive knowledge, understanding and skills and its assessment.

Members: Graham Falgate; Kate Christopher; Dilwyn Hunt; Lesley Prior

Task Group 2: to develop strategies designed to structure and sustain the future of RE

DfE Guidance: Q&A on RE and Collective worship:

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/r/re%20and%20collective%20worship%20in%20acads%20and%20fs%20qanda.pdf>

1) Legal background

- a) Section 409 of the 1996 Education Act allowed a local authority (LA) to make arrangements for the consideration or disposal of any complaint about the unreasonable action of the LA or of a Governing Body in relation to a statutory duty or power. This would include admissions and the provision of an appropriate curriculum for example.
- b) The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 introduced the role of a Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) to deliver a new complaints handling service for parents and pupils with concerns about schools. The plan of the previous government was for there to be a phased introduction of this scheme, so 14 authorities did engage a LGO but the scheme was not commenced elsewhere.

2) Recent developments

- a) In 2011, the Education Act removed the role of a Local Government Ombudsman in handling complaints about the curriculum but did not restore the previous arrangements. Instead, from 1st August 2012, the Secretary of State for Education became responsible for considering complaints of this nature. The government has stated its commitment to ensuring that there is much clearer information about how individuals can complain when they feel it is necessary.
- b) The Secretary of State retains the power of intervention. These powers are known as the '496/497 powers'. Where a school is failing to fulfil its legal duties or behaving in a way that is not responsible, an individual or group may appeal to the Secretary of State who has the power to direct a school to act.
- c) The Secretary of State is not required to intervene in every case that is brought to his attention but he must always consider whether, in light of the information provided to him by a complainant, he should exercise his powers

3) The role of SACRE in monitoring the duty to provide religious education

- a) As part of the responsibility of their remit to monitor the provision of the local Agreed Syllabus, a SACRE might investigate the evidence that a school was not making appropriate provision for Religious Education. This investigation might utilise for example school level data about GCSE entries published by the DfE each spring¹. Each school will have a publication scheme² which will detail other sources of information that it publishes such as the curriculum policy or information found in a prospectus. See school information regulations.³
- b) SACRE might conduct an investigation and ask the school to explain any apparent inconsistencies between the data or policies and the requirement to make provision for RE. So for example, if the local Agreed Syllabus requires that schools offer the GCSE short course as a minimum entitlement at Key Stage 4 and there are lower numbers of entry for GCSE in the data, SACRE would have reasonable cause to doubt that appropriate provision was being made.
- c) If the result of SACRE's investigation concluded that children and young people were not receiving their entitlement to the appropriate provision for RE, then they could make a formal complaint to the school and governing body

4) Making a complaint about the duty to provide religious education

- a) Regarding the duty to provide religious education, the procedure for complaining is the same as for other types of complaint about the curriculum. Under section 29 of the 2002 Education Act, each maintained school in England must have a procedure in place for dealing with complaints relating to the school.
- b) They are required to publish a complaints procedure and any individual with a complaint should follow that procedure in the first instance. If, once the school's procedures are exhausted, they remain dissatisfied with the outcome, then after 1 August 2012, the complainant may raise their complaint with the Secretary of State.
- c) This means that if SACRE is not satisfied with the response to their complaint to the school about the provision for RE they too can complain to the Secretary of State.
- d) If the complaint were upheld, the Secretary of State could consider 'a direction' which might take the form of a letter.

For further information please refer to <http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/complaintsprocedure/b00212240/making-complaint-school/how-to-complain>

¹ <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001057/sfr03-2012.pdf>

² Required under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

³ <http://www.education.gov.uk/a00208330/faqs-about-changes-to-school-information-regulations>

SYLLABUS TRAINING FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS – EVENT REPORT

Report By: Advisor to Herefordshire SACRE

Purpose

1. To report on the syllabus training event for Special Schools held October 2012.

Report

2. As reported to the November SACRE a very successful syllabus training event was held for special schools. The attached report provides further information on the day's event.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT subject to any comments by SACRE the report be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.

The Burning Core

Getting to the heart of RE with special school pupils

If you were asked to choose an object that holds special memories, or a photo of someone you love, or describe a smell that reminds you of something special, or a piece of nature, or some words that you love, what would you choose?

For one group of special school teachers, these include a book of poems, wooden witchetty grubs, a hand-made box, a tube of Cuticare, a giraffe: all of these evoke treasured memories, of family members or past travels; of caring for aged relatives or the deep-seated desire to be taller... The objects and their description awake ideas of growth, love and hope, pain, loss and grief, moments of happiness, anger and reconciliation. They make deep connections with things that really matter.



Making connections

This was the starting-point of a day of training with special school teachers, set up and funded by Gloucestershire and Herefordshire SACREs, held on 10th October 2012. Leader Anne Krisman encouraged teachers to see that these kinds of connections are at the heart of our lives. It is therefore vital to recognise the kinds of experiences that are at the heart of the lives of special school pupils too – to understand what matters to them and then fashion our teaching to this, making genuine connections. Given the legal requirement that special school pupils will receive RE “as far as is practicable”, instead of wasting time doing things that the children will never access, we should do the things that will speak to our pupils.



Twelve teachers from special schools in the two counties gathered to consider the impact of the recently revised agreed syllabuses on their RE planning, teaching and learning. Anne Krisman, teacher at Little Heath School, Redbridge, showed that we should avoid a “deficit model” of planning, where the syllabus is watered down, adapting a few units of work, or teaching units for 4-6 year olds to 7-11s or 11-14s. Instead, we should draw on the key ideas of “exploring and responding” from the syllabuses. Special school RE should explore authentic and central concepts from religions, on the basis of what will connect with children’s experiences and enable them to respond.

Five Keys into RE

In 2011, Anne’s planning structure for special school RE gained a Hockerill Foundation Award for Innovative RE. Her five keys for planning are:

1. Connection – what links can we make with our pupils’ lives?
Creating a bridge between pupils’ experiences and the religious theme.
2. Knowledge – What is the burning core of the faith?
Selecting what really matters in a religious theme, cutting out peripheral information.
3. Senses – What sensory elements are in the religion?
Looking for a range of authentic sensory experiences that link with the theme.
4. Symbols – What are the symbols that are most accessible?
Choosing symbols that will encapsulate the theme.
5. Values – What are the values in the religion that speak to us?
Making links between the values of the religious theme and the children’s lives.

This simple but profound approach enables teachers to use agreed syllabuses as sources of information for religious themes and concepts, but then to plan RE so that pupils could explore and respond, promoting their personal development by making connections with core religious concepts and their own experiences.

Creative responses

Teachers explored a dozen active, creative strategies using dance, ritual, art and craft, music, photography, words and video. We watched clips of Anne's pupils using dance to meditate on how Mary felt during the crucifixion, and to explore the theme of looking for love. Following her pupils' idea of a healing ceremony after the 2004 tsunami, teachers talked about rituals that might signal welcoming or farewells, remembrance or resurrection with their pupils.



Making a simple model of the Dalai Lama, using silver foil to beautify images of Jesus and Mary, lending them the appearance of an icon, creating paper water-lilies that open in a bowl of water... just some of the delights that stimulated the thinking and sharing among the teachers.



Meditation

In the middle of the day, we spent a time in meditation. Led by Tibetan nun, Ani-la Choesang, we experienced some moments of calm and focus, hearing about ways of helping special school children to practise mindfulness. She modelled the best posture for meditation, encouraging us to think about our spine, shoulders and neck, to keep our eyes only half closed to prevent sleepiness, and to touch our tongue on the roof of our mouths, before leading us in a meditation to focus on our breathing. We then spent some time considering a raisin – holding it before we put it in our mouths to focus on the sensation, experiencing the raisin... We talked about the value of meditation for children, with relaxation, calming, controlling anger or irritation, or focusing the mind.



Energised

It is rare to attend training sessions for RE teachers in special schools, led by experienced practitioners, and this day was greatly appreciated by the teachers present. They enjoyed the opportunity to meet with other specialists, sharing ideas and experiences. The variety of practical examples were valued, stimulating further thinking. Anne's training approach was welcomed – calm, warm, professional and rooted in genuine experience. Teachers voiced their intention to make good use of the Five Keys planning tool as they revise the teaching of RE in their schools to support the learning of their pupils. And they expressed their gratitude to Gloucestershire and Herefordshire SACREs for setting up and supporting the day.

Stephen Pett

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Her book, *Growing in RE*, is available from RE Today. Little Heath school's RE features in Ofsted's good practice resources, which give more details of the Five Keys approach, and some examples of pupil responses. <http://tinyurl.com/ao4ey4q>

The Venerable Tsultrim Tenzin Choesang (Ani-la Choesang) can be contacted at Choesang@the-hermit-online.co.uk

Flo's list, based on an idea by Flo Longhorn: all teachers were asked to bring along to share

- a photo of someone I love
- a beautiful small object which hold memories for me
- a piece of nature
- a smell that delights me or reminds me of something special
- words I love, maybe a poem or a pop song, a prayer or
- a name/ a memory of someone(or an animal) who I remember