

Minutes of the meeting of Standing advisory council for religious education (SACRE) held at Committee Room 1 - The Shire Hall, St. Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Friday 29 June 2018 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor J Stone (Chairman)

Members: Geoffrey Ault, Lou Barker, Ben Caldicott, Councillor MT McEvilly, Johnathan Nicholas and Miss A Taylor

In attendance: Alison Naylor, Stephen Pett and Matthew Evans

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Harvey, Mrs Ault, Ms Nugent and Ani-la Choesang.

The Chairperson welcomed Ben Caldicott to the meeting who had joined SACRE as the primary school teachers' representative.

The Chairperson explained that a request had been received from Ani-la Choesang for meetings to be moved from Friday afternoon. It was explained that this had been the arrangement for some time and any other suggestions were welcomed which would be considered.

2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

It was reported that Mr Ault would act as a substitute for Mrs Ault at the meeting.

3. MINUTES

There was a minor correction to the summary of discussions appended to the minutes. The budget for 2017/18 year had previously been spent on commissioning an external body; the budget for 2018/19 of £5,000 had not been allocated to such a purpose as yet.

Resolved – that the minutes of the previous meeting on 16 March 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

4. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)

No public questions were received.

5. SACRE MEMBERSHIP

SACRE considered a report from the Democratic Services Officer which provided an update on the membership and current vacancies. The points below were made in the discussion that followed:

- A teacher at Kingsland School had expressed an interest in joining SACRE; further details were available from Miss Taylor;
- It was felt that an advertisement should be placed in spotlight to publicise the committee and encourage candidates to volunteer;
- It was suggested that there should be contact with the Hospital Chaplaincy who would also have links with other faiths;
- The chaplaincy at the Gurkha camps could be contacted for potential members of the Hindu faith; and
- In order to fill the vacancy for a Roman Catholic member it was advised to contact the Arch Diocese and Belmont Abbey.

RESOLVED – That the report is noted and those actions raised as part of the debate above are pursued.

6. PLANS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SACRE considered the feedback from the recent Primary Conference which had taken place in the afternoon after the suggestion of the committee. The feedback was introduced by Stephen Pett who explained that it had been very positive but numbers had diminished for the conference and there had been mixed comments about the timing of the conference. Details of the secondary conference were also presented (feedback from the secondary conferences was circulated – appended to the signed version of the minutes) and it was explained that the special schools conference would take place on 3 July.

SACRE made the comments below in the discussion which followed:

- It was felt that the full day conference was better which helped to bring staff members together for a full day;
- It was suggested that in future the day could consist of a number of sessions to which people could opt in or out;
- The conference provided a useful opportunity for networking;
- It was suggested that video-conferencing and webinars would be useful facilities particularly if the conference sessions were made available online as a training resource;
- The impact of academisation was raised and the new ways in which schools were accessing religious education information which may not include approaching SACRE;
- It was suggested that RE co-ordinators should be consulted to determine the content of future conferences;
- It was suggested that detail be made available to teachers through spotlight and messages to schools to go directly to RE coordinators. Kite was a publication from Wigmore which could be used;

- Detail of the secondary conference should be made aware to teacher training students at the university of Worcester;
- The last 30 minutes of the secondary conference involving the presentation by teachers had been particularly inspiring;
- It was suggested that by making the conference free attendance could be encouraged. Grants to host the conferences were also proposed and contact with the Council was suggested to access funding;
- A survey of schools to determine the reasons for not attending the conference was felt to be a good idea to inform the arrangements and content of future conferences;

RESOLVED – that the feedback from the conferences is noted and that the actions proposed above are investigated.

7. UPDATE ON NEW INITIATIVES IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SACRE received an update on new initiatives in religious education as outlined in the report appended to the agenda. Stephen Pett, RE Today introduced the report and highlight the key updates.

During the discussion that followed the following points were raised:

- It was proposed that the link to the survey of NATRE to primary teachers be included in Spotlight to ensure as many teachers in Herefordshire as possible responded;
- It was reported that the manner in which religious education was regarded by the department for education and Ofsted was shifting. Ofsted reports were now identifying if schools were meeting their statutory obligations and a recently answer in parliament from Nick Gibb MP defined clearly the need for schools compliance in the provision of religious education;
- The Commission on RE was due to report before the next meeting of SACRE and the papers for the meeting would include detail regarding the outcomes;
- The results of SIAMs inspections were referred to and it was noted that the majority of Herefordshire schools were considered to be good with very few allocated a requires improvement rating;
- It was proposed that the Cabinet Member for Children and Wellbeing be invited to the next meeting of SACRE in November to understand the statutory responsibilities of the committee;

The committee discussed the procurement of religious education consultation services by Herefordshire Council to support SACRE. During the discussion Stephen Pett, the current consultant from RE Today left the meeting. It was requested that a briefing note be provided to the committee following the meeting to explain the process surrounding the procurement and the role of SACRE, if any, in the initiation of the procurement or the awarding of the contract. Clarification regarding the amount of the tender was also requested; there was some confusion as to whether the tender amounted to £5k or £8k.

Stephen Pett re-joined the meeting.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was currently scheduled for 16 November 2018. However this date was not convenient and would be rearranged.

The meeting ended at 3.27 pm

Chairman