

MINUTES of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Friday, 8th December, 2006 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor J. Stone (Chairman)

Councillors: Revd. P. Barlow, Mr. P. Bowen, Rev C Marrison,
Mrs S McCamley, Mr. Z. Pandor and Revd. I. Terry

In attendance: Mrs Angela Daniel, Kingsland CE Primary School

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs WU Attfield, Mrs J Brown; Mrs C Ault; Ms K Mayglothling; and Mr M Rollnick.

18. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no named substitutes.

19. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the minutes of the meeting held 3rd July 2006 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

20. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No written questions had been received. However, the Chairman drew SACREs attention to the report in the Hereford Times for 14th September 2006 that three Weobley High School students had gained results in the top five from an entry of 18,545 students for religious studies.

SACRE congratulated Rebecca Mainwaring, Cassandra Longford and Shannon Geer on their splendid achievement. SACRE also congratulated the Head of RE at the School.

RESOLVED That the Chairman write via Weobley High School to congratulate the three students on their achievement.

21. MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The Democratic Services Officer reported that Mrs A. Mundy had resigned as Free Church representative on the grounds that she no longer felt able to represent that sector. In accordance with the constitution Churches Together in Herefordshire had nominated Rev. Lloyd Rickards who was welcomed to the meeting.

He also reported that due to work relocation Mr H Singh had resigned as Sikh representative. He further reported that also due to work relocation to Cardiff Mr K. Scot had resigned as Secondary School teacher representative. The Democratic Services Officer reported that on behalf of SACRE he had corresponded with each of

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them to thank them for their contribution to education in the County. In consultation with the Chairman and in accordance with the constitution, the Clerk would make arrangements to fill the current vacancies.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and arrangements be made for vacancies to be filled in accordance with the constitution.

22. 2006 ANNUAL SACRE CONFERENCE AND PROPOSALS FOR 2007 ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

SACRE received a report on the 2006 SACRE Annual Conference held 28th September 2006 and considered and identified outline proposals for the 2007 Annual Conference.

The Chairman complemented the Consultant for Religious Education on organising yet another enjoyable and very successful Annual Conference.

The Consultant for Religious Education reported that there had been 50 plus attendees at the Conference, which had been linked to the launch of the new Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. The event had benefited from attendance by notable national speakers and the evaluation comments had been complementary.

The Consultant for Religious Education further reported that Hedley Lodge, Belmont had been provisionally booked for the 2007 Annual Conference, which would take place on 27th September 2007. It was intended that the Conference would follow the traditional format with the theme linked to the proposed multi-faith festival to be discussed later on the agenda. SACRE noted that Mr Rollnick had contacted Rabbi Danny Rich about being the key note speaker and that a reply was awaited.

SACRE appreciated that the Conference contributed to the professional development of teachers and raised the profile of RE in the County.

RESOLVED That the report on the 2006 Annual Conference be noted and the proposals outlined for 2007 be accepted.

23. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP GUIDANCE - UPDATE

SACRE received an update on the introduction of the Collective Worship Guidance.

Mrs Angela Daniel, Kingsland CE Primary School and Chair of the Collective Guidance Working Group, gave a presentation to SACRE on the work of the Group in formulating the guidance and the ethos behind the range of themes covered. She reported that while there were elements of commonality with 'Values Education' teaching there were distinct differences in the guidance to ensure that collective worship met the requirements to be 'wholly, broadly or mainly Christian. She further reported that while principally for use in primary schools, secondary and special schools would benefit from receiving the guidance, thereby making them aware of the experiences at primary level. She hoped that a similar Working Group would now take up the challenge to produce comparable guidance for secondary schools. The Guidance was currently at the printers and she suggested that if possible any launch should avoid being linked to any particular faith group thereby emphasising the wider context.

Mrs A. Daniel commented that SACRE should hold the copyright for 'Finding Treasure'.

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SACRE thanked Mrs Daniel and the Working Group for their considerable work in producing the Guidance. They agreed that the Guidance needed to be celebrated and should be launched at an appropriate event, a format for which was briefly outlined by the Primary Schools Improvement Manager.

Copies of the Guidance would be issued to Herefordshire schools in hard copy and appropriate sections e.g. guidance forms, could be made available on the education web site. SACRE noted that a least one other SACRE had already requested copies.

RESOLVED That

- a) The report be noted and on behalf of SACRE the Chairman write to members of the Working Group to thank them for their considerable work in producing the Collective Worship Guidance; and**
- b) The Guidance be launched at an appropriate event.**

24. CONFERENCE - STRONG SACRES, GOOD RE

The Chairman, Councillor J Stone, reported on issues arising from his attendance at a national development workshop for SACRE Chairs sponsored by QCA, RE Council and NASACRE.

The Chairman reported that it had been an informative event and he would produce a report in due course. However, the following issues had been raised:

- There was a proposal for a national strategy for RE – while the strategy was still awaited the intention was to raise the profile of RE and ensure that all areas of the country were aware of best practice. While RE was a basic curriculum subject it had not benefited to the degree that national curriculum subjects had. The national strategy would not replace the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
- Implications around the 14 to 19 agenda.
- Proposals for a 'commission on RE teacher training' to promote the qualification of teachers, particularly in the secondary school sector.
- In an attempt to further standardise the Annual SACRE report to QCA, QCA were piloting a new report format, which was currently causing a degree of concern among some SACREs.

The Chairman also referred to '30+ things a good SACRE can do' produced by Lat Blaylock, which advocated 'activism' in SACREs, copies of which would be circulated to members. He highlighted that the work of SACRE should be made more widely known and suggested that when appropriate, an item be raised at Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED That

- a) the report be noted and a written report on the proceedings be circulated to members together with copies of '30+ things a good SACRE can do'.**
- b) The Chairman explore the possibility of an item being placed on the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee**

25. MONITORING OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SACRE considered how it could evaluate the work of the Local Authority in monitoring and inspecting Religious Education in Schools.

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The Consultant for Religious Education reported that in accordance with minute No 14 of the July meeting she had been invited to visit a number of schools to discuss their provision and teaching of RE. During the last term she had visited 5 primary schools (2 small rural; 2 Voluntary Controlled and 1 large county primary). She thought that the visits had been very productive for both the schools and to enable her to gauge the state of RE. Next term she would be visiting 5 primary and 1 secondary schools.

While a full report would be made when the complete programme had been undertaken she reported that a number of common issues had already been identified namely: undertaking assessment and monitoring; lesson planning and the allocation of subject time particularly at KS1. She also highlighted that there was emerging anecdotal evidence of adverse parental attitudes towards some religious groups beginning to impact on organising visits to places of worship as required by the Agreed Syllabus.

SACRE noted the report and in posing the question 'how do we get to those schools that don't invite a visit' debated the possibility of persuading community schools to complete selected sections of a 'self evaluation form' (SEF). Church schools already complete a SEF as part of their Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools (SIAS) 'tool kit'. SACRE noted that the Consultant for Religious Education had issued the SEF to schools prior to her visit and it had been received with interest as a prompt for issues for discussion. It was also suggested that secondary schools could share with SACRE their RE department evaluation.

RESOLVED That the report be noted and a full report on the current programme of monitoring be presented to a future meeting.

26. DRAFT HEREFORDSHIRE SACRE ANNUAL REPORT - ACADEMIC YEAR 2005/2006

SACRE commented on the draft SACRE Annual Report for the academic year September 2005 to July 2006 prior to submission to QCA.

The Democratic Services Officer presented the draft report for consideration by SACRE. He commented that the new report format being piloted by QCA mentioned in an earlier item may have a bearing on future Annual reports and, to ensure that the expected range of information is provided, this may necessitate a greater range of information presented to SACRE. He further commented on the QCA publication 'Religious education and collective worship – An analysis of 2005 SACRE reports' copies of which were issued to members, which could inform the further development of the SACRE Development Plan.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and subject to final proof reading the SACRE Annual Report 2005/06 be submitted to QCA.

27. SACRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2007 - 2010

SACRE was invited to consider and agree the SACRE Development Plan for the period 2007 to 2010.

At its July 2006 meeting SACRE established a review working group to review the SACRE Development Plan and the resultant draft plan was included in the agenda for consideration.

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The Consultant for RE reported that based on the SACRE Self Evaluation tool the plan focused on a range of aspects of SACRE's work and these were set out in the agenda report. She further reported that the plan identified the three key purposes of SACRE and six key activities to achieve the purposes and set out suggested actions to attain those purposes.

SACRE debated the general use of the Self Evaluation Form (SEF) in the work of SACRE and the contribution that 'Finding Treasure' guidance would have on Collective Worship. In relation to INSET training SACRE noted that while welcoming the intention to be included in the annual programme of training provided in partnership with the Hereford Diocese, Herefordshire Catholic schools came under guidance issued to the Welsh Counties as it was part of the Cardiff Archdiocese, being comprised of the Counties of Gwent, Mid Glamorgan and South Glamorgan together with Herefordshire.

RESOLVED That subject to necessary periodic review the SACRE Development Plan 2007-2010 be adopted.

28. SCHEMES OF WORK TO SUPPORT THE 2006 AGREED SYLLABUS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SACRE received an update on the provision of further schemes of work to support the 2006 Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

The Consultant for RE reported that the Working Group formed to compile schemes of work to support the new Syllabus had met and further schemes of work had been produced to complete the series namely: three for KS1; four for KS2 and one specifically for the Bahá'í faith, and that these would be issued in both hard copy and on the web via the Children's Services site. These schemes of work would be issued to all schools on a CD which also contained PowerPoint presentations for use in schools of 'insights into three local faith families' and information on 'Visits and visitors for Religious Education'.

RESOLVED That the report be noted and the Chairman write to the members of the Working Group to acknowledge their work in compiling the Schemes of Work to support the new Agreed Syllabus.

29. PROPOSED MULTI-FAITH FESTIVAL

SACRE received an update on organising a Multi-faith Festival for Herefordshire.

The Consultant for Religious Education reported that a number of meetings had taken place and an outline for the event had been formulated. The current proposal was to link the event to the SACRE Annual Conference by holding a series of workshops for schools on the two days immediately prior to the Conference. However, despite exploring various sources of funding for the event no funds (circa £5,000) had so far been secured. She reported that in anticipation of funding being secured further meetings would be held to progress the planning stage.

In the context of a multi-faith event the Consultant for Religious Education read a short report by Mr Rollnick on the proceedings at the 'Saving the Planet' Seminar held 9th October 2006 and unplanned pyrotechnical display during the interval.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

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**30. POLICY ON THE USE OF EXTERNAL FUNDING TO SUPPORT SCHOOL
ACTIVITIES**

SACRE were advised on the use of external funding to support school activities.

In response to a question raised at the July 2006 meeting the Primary Schools Improvement Manager reported that external funds were owned by that organisation e.g. A Parent Teacher Association, and therefore spending would be decided by them. The organisation, which is usually a charity, is usually restricted to using those funds to support their charitable aims. Once the funds have been donated to the school, the school could theoretically be free to spend the money as it wished, however, most funds were donated for a specific purpose, which the school agreed to action.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

31. FUTURE MEETING DATES 2007 - 2008

SACRE noted the future meeting dates for 2007-2008.

The meeting ended at 2.30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN