

MINUTES of the meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) held at the Town Hall, St. Owen Street, Hereford on Tuesday 1st July, 2003 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor J. Stone (Chairman)

Sister M. Gallagher, Dr. M. Goodman, Ms. K. Mayglothling, Mrs A. Mundy, Mr J. Rendall, Mr. M. Rollnick.

1. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reported that following the local government elections in May 2003, former Councillor Mrs J.H. Thomas, who had not stood for re-election, could not continue as a member of SACRE. The Chairman referred to the valuable service Mrs Thomas had given to SACRE since 1998 and congratulated her on receiving an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list for her services to the community.

The Chairman also referred to former Councillor A.J. Allen who had not been returned in the local elections and therefore could not represent the LEA. He commented that, as a former headteacher Mr Allen had made an important contribution to both the work of SACRE since 1998 and education generally.

SACRE noted with regret that this would be the last SACRE meeting attended by Sister Margaret Gallagher. She reported that due to commitments at the Cardiff Archdiocese Religious Education Service, regrettably she was unable to maintain her position as Roman Catholic representative and thanked SACRE members for their support and friendship over the years. She further reported that Fr. Martin Donnelly from Our Lady's RC Church would be replacing her as the Roman Catholic Representative. SACRE thanked Sister Gallagher for her significant contribution to Religious education in the County and her valuable work on SACRE since 1999.

The Head of Inspection, Advice and School Performance complemented Councillor J. Stone on his re-election to Herefordshire Council and his re-appointment as Chairman of SACRE.

RESOLVED: That

- (a) the Chairman write to Mrs J.H. Thomas and Mr A.J. Allen to thank them for their valuable service and support to SACRE and to congratulate Mrs Thomas on her MBE.**
- (b) the appointment of Father Martin Donnelly as the Roman Catholic representative (Committee A) on SACRE be welcomed.**

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mrs J. Brown, Rev P. Barlow, Rev. I. Terry, Mrs. R. Privett.

3. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no named substitutes.

4. MINUTES

Mr Rendall briefly updated the meeting on the Development of Collective Worship in Schools (Minute No 43). Schools had been informed of a meeting in October when further information and ideas would be gathered. It was hoped that a report could be formulated within the following three months.

SACRE noted that good levels of publicity were being achieved for the Anne Frank Community Exhibition 2003. However, problems had arisen over obtaining volunteer guides for the event.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th March, 2003 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

No written questions from members of the public had been received.

6. REPRESENTATION OF OTHER FAITHS ON SACRE

SACRE considered whether the current membership of SACRE, and in particular Committee A, adequately reflected the proportionate strength of denominations in the County.

SACRE received a report by the Committee Administrator (Scrutiny) outlining the guidance contained in DFE Circular 1/94 concerning the membership of Committee A, namely: Christian denominations and other religions and religious denominations (other than the Church of England who comprise Committee B) that reflect broadly the proportionate strength of that denomination or religion in the area. The report also indicated that appointments were made by the Local Education Authority and outlined two areas that the LEA would have to take into consideration in making such appointments.

The Head of Inspection, Advice and School Performance (IASPS) reported that while statistically Herefordshire had a small number of 'Other Faiths', SACRE needed to consider the wider multi-faith communities represented in the Country as a whole and reflected in the programmes of study contained in the Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

The Committee Administrator (Scrutiny) cautioned that, in accordance with DFE guidance 1/94, the inclusion on Committee A of representatives of belief systems such as humanism, which did not amount to a religion or religious denomination, would be contrary to legal provisions. However, it would be permissible to appoint such representatives as non-voting co-opted members.

It was agreed that SACRE should lead by example and encourage racial harmony and promote inter-faith dialogue. They discussed various means of obtaining representatives from the various faith groups in the County. SACRE was however, conscious of the need to ensure that nominated representatives should truly represent their faith group as a whole. It was noted that an associated benefit, to SACRE and RE teachers, of a wider membership base would be the further

establishment of links, and exchange of information, between the various faith groups.

On an associated issue the Head of Inspection, Advice and School Performance (IASPS) reported that Mrs R. Privett, Head of Pembridge C.E. Primary School, would be leaving Herefordshire to take up a new teaching post. A vacancy would therefore arise on Committee C as Primary Education representative, and he suggested that a replacement representative be sought from the maintained schools sector.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That

- (a) the LEA be requested to seek accredited representatives from other faith groups in Herefordshire to serve on SACRE;**
- (b) accredited representatives of other belief systems be considered for co-option by SACRE; and**
- (c) the LEA be requested to seek a replacement Primary Education representative from the County School sector.**

FURTHER RESOLVED:

That

- (d) the Chairman write to Mrs R. Privett to thank her for her valuable contribution to education in the County, particularly at Pembridge C.E. Primary School, and for her significant involvement in the work of SACRE since October 1998; and**
- (e) the term of office for co-opted members on SACRE be reviewed at the next meeting.**

7. RECENT OFSTED INSPECTIONS

The Head of Inspection, Advice and School Performance (IASPS) presented a report on the outcomes of the Ofsted inspections of Herefordshire schools undertaken since the start of the academic year in September 2002, with particular reference to the quality of religious education.

He commented that a significant number of schools had been inspected by Ofsted since the start of the academic year and his report gave a brief summary of the outcomes of those Ofsted reports. The report covered the following schools:

Ashperton Primary School

Brookfield School (an Emotional and Behavioural Disorder [EBD] Special School)

Clehonger Church of England Primary School

Clifford Primary School

Holme Lacy Primary School

Holmer Church of England Primary School

Kington Primary School

Ledbury Primary School

Leominster Junior School
Longtown Primary School
Lord Scudamor Primary School
Luston Primary School
Mordiford Primary School
Much Birch Church of England Primary School
Shobdon Primary School
St Francis Xaviers Roman Catholic School
St Thomas Cantilupe Church of England Primary School
St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Credenhill
Stoke Prior Primary School
Stretton Sugwas Primary School
Haywood High School
Whitecross High School

The Head of Inspection, Advice and School Performance (IASPS) commented that in the main the outcomes had been very positive. He mentioned in particular that Brookfield Special School had now been taken out of Special Measures having made good progress. He expressed surprise about the report for Lord Scudamore Primary School. Overall the school had received a good report. However, in relation to the drop in standards in RE he thought this related to the school's failure to give the subject the minimum time recommended by the Agreed Syllabus and the level of priority accorded in the school's Development Plan.

He apologised that three schools had been omitted from the list and reported that the Ofsted report for Lugwardine Primary School indicated it was a good school with good RE features. Michaelchurch Escley Primary School was an effective school with good RE features. Weobley Primary School had received a very good inspection report and was a highly effective school. Three further schools had, or were about to be, inspected and the outcome of those inspections would be reported to the next meeting.

SACRE noted the efforts made by all schools and acknowledged that both Whitecross and Haywood High Schools had made enormous improvements in recent years. It was suggested that, in view of the number of recent Ofsted inspections, either a press release be issued or a letter be sent to all schools complimenting them on their high level of attainment in teaching Religious Education.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the Chairman write to all schools in Herefordshire complimenting them on their high level of attainment in Religious Education.

8. DIOCESE OF HEREFORD: SECTION 23 INSPECTION OF SCHOOLS

Mr Rendall reported upon the Diocese of Hereford: Section 23 Inspection of Schools in relation to the inspection of Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled Schools. He reported that Credenhill CE Primary School had just been inspected and four other schools were due for inspection in the autumn.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

9. ACTS: 2 – ANNUAL REPORT AND UPDATE

Mr Rendall reported upon the work of ACTS 2 (A Christian Team in Schools) and presented the ACTS: 2 Annual Report.

He reported that the ACTS: 2 Team had had a busy year working to promote, and support Collective Worship in schools in Herefordshire. He circulated at the meeting an information sheet detailing the aims and objectives of ACTS: 2 and extracts of feedback from schools which indicated a very favourable response to the work of the team. He further reported that a number of visits to schools were on hold due to a shortage of trained team members. He also reported that similar compliments had been received following the visit of GSUS LIVE. The ACTS:2 team had offered their support to the KS 3 project, discussed later in the meeting, and also to the development and support of Christian Clubs in High Schools.

RESOLVED: That the report on ACTS: 2 be noted.

10. SACRE ANNUAL CONFERENCE - UPDATE

The Consultant for RE reported on the planning for the SACRE Annual Conference 2003.

She reported that workshop leaders had been organised for the 6 faith workshops. However, the Buddhist workshop required final confirmation. A number of SACRE members were assigned to welcome and host workshop leaders. This would facilitate the smooth running of the event and enable the member to report back to SACRE on any issues that occurred. She requested that SACRE members be ready with questions for the Faith Forum at the end of the conference programme.

She also reported that a kind contribution (£155) towards the fees for the keynote speaker at the conference had been received from The Council of Christians and Jews.

The Head of Inspection, Advice and School Performance (IASPS) commented generally that, following recent changes to school budgets, it had been noted both locally and nationally that attendance figures at education conferences and courses had declined. He reminded SACRE that a large proportion of the cost of attending courses was the provision of supply cover while away from school. On commenting that a Conference reminder leaflet would be sent to schools in due course, it was suggested that the leaflet include information that the 'Bookstore' and 'Articles of Faith' would also be available at the Conference.

RESOLVED: That the report on planning for the SACRE Annual Conference 2003 be noted.

11. KS3 PROJECT UPDATE

SACRE received an update report on the KS3 (Key Stage 3) project and were invited to consider sample pages of the KS3 project work for recommendation to the LEA.

Ms Mayglothing reported upon the project and stated that, subject to consideration by the LEA, it was intended that the project work would be piloted by a number of secondary schools during summer 2003. Subject to funding availability, the results would be evaluated in December 2003. The sample work, attached to the report at appendix 1, included lesson plans and materials relevant to that lesson. In addition there were examples of two of the assessments included in the project. It was

intended that all secondary schools would receive a copy of the project with a video of believers' testimonies and a cassette of relevant music to accompany lesson activities. She intended to visit secondary school RE departments to introduce the project. The RE Swapshop termly meeting would also be used to advertise the project.

SACRE congratulated Ms Mayglothling and the Working Group on producing the project. Following the Head of IASPS's comment that limited funding would be available to complete the project evaluation, Sister Gallagher suggested contacting the General Teaching Council for grant funding.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the work of the KS3 Working Group be supported.

12. TERMLY TEACHERS MEETING

The Consultant for RE reported that the last termly teachers meeting had received a presentation by Janet Brown and Melanie Mellor on Religious Education and Special Educational Needs. She reported that while numbers attending had been low the evening had been very worthwhile. The next meeting for RE subject leaders would be held on 7th July at which Navinder Gill was expected to speak about growing up and living as a Sikh.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

13. FUTURE ISSUES FOR SACRE

SACRE considered issues for future meetings and the following suggested subjects were noted:

- **A non-statutory framework for religious education** – The Consultant for RE briefly updated SACRE on the position regarding the proposal to introduce a non-statutory framework for religious education. She reported that currently strong lobbying was underway by both sides concerning the proposal. This was an important issue and a report on further developments would be presented in due course.

Copies of the QCA booklet 'A non-statutory framework for religious education – Report of a feasibility study' were made available at the meeting.

- **Ofsted Inspection Reports** – The Head of IASPS commented that in recent years a large number of school Ofsted inspections had been undertaken with the results being reported to SACRE. While those individual results had on the whole been extremely positive about RE in schools, he suggested that the reports be analysed to ascertain whether there were any wider or underlying RE issues that needed to be addressed.
- **Presentations to SACRE** – The Head of IASPS commented that the occasional Faith and teaching RE presentations to SACRE had worked well and SACRE had learned a great deal about the issues concerned. He enquired whether SACRE wished to continue with the presentations, particularly the practice of inviting schools to talk about the reality of teaching Religious Education. The RE Consultant commented that SACRE needed to be clear about what it wanted to get out of the presentations.

- **The Marches Consortium – Teacher Training** – It was suggested that SACRE receive a presentation and or report on the work the Marches Consortium were undertaking in connection with their teacher training programmes.

RESOLVED:

That

- (a) a report be presented to a future meeting on the proposals for a non-statutory framework for religious education;
- (b) the recent Ofsted inspection results be analysed to ascertain whether there were any wider or underlying RE issues that needed to be addressed and a report be presented to a future meeting; and
- (c) a presentation be given to a future meeting on the Teacher Training programmes run by The Marches Consortium.

14. NEXT MEETING

SACRE discussed the proposed date of the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the next meeting be held at 2.00 p.m on Tuesday, 2nd December, 2003 at Brockington, Hafod Road, Hereford.

The meeting ended at 3.56 p.m.

CHAIRMAN