

MINUTES of the meeting of Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus Conference held at Council Chamber, Brockington on Monday 5 July 2010 at 2.30 pm

Present: Councillor J Stone (Chairman)

Cllr. WU Attfield, Revd. P. Barlow, Mr. P. Bowen, Mrs S Bryant, Ani-La Choesang, Cllr. Brig P Jones CBE, Mrs G Jutle, Mrs S McCamley, Sr. D. O'Donnell and Ms C Wolfe

In attendance: Mrs A Daniel and Ms. K. Mayglothling

30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from: Mrs C Ault; Mrs L Barker; Mrs A Daniel and Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins.

31. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no named substitutes.

32. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2010 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

33. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No written questions were received.

34. AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE MEMBERSHIP

The Agreed Syllabus Conference considered its membership.

Church of England Member

The Chairman reported that Mr Tony Leach, Director of Education for the Church of England Diocesan Board of Education, had resigned on health grounds. The Clerk's representative reported that the Conference's best wishes had already been forwarded to Mr Leach.

The Conference noted that Ms T Gregory, nominated substitute for Mr T Leach had also left the Diocesan Board of Education.

The Conference noted that Mrs Sheila Bryant had been nominated by the Diocesan Board of Education to replace Mr Leach on Committee B and that the local authority had approved the nomination. The Conference welcomed Mrs Bryant to the meeting.

Buddhist Member

On considering nominations for new membership the Chairman reported that the Venerable Tsuiltrim Tenzin Choesang, who was a senior nun within the Tibetan tradition of Buddhism, had been nominated as the member for the Buddhist faith on Committee A. The Conference agreed the nomination and noted that the local authority had approved the nomination. The Conference welcomed Ani-La Choesang to the meeting.

Special Education Teaching Member

The Chairman further reported that following the resignation of Mrs J Brown the local authority proposed that Ms D Vickress (Barrs Court Special School) become the member for special education teaching on Committee C. The Conference agreed the appointment of Ms D Vickress to Committee C.

35. SYLLABUS REVIEW - CONSIDERATION OF FURTHER DRAFTING WORK

The Agreed Syllabus Conference considered the further drafting work undertaken by the Consultant for RE as part of the review of the Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus.

The Consultant for RE reported that while undertaking the further drafting work he had taken into account the feedback from the secondary school sector consultation held 24 April and the primary school sector consultation held 17 May 2010. In so far as it was currently possible, he had also taken into consideration changes to government policy and any implications for RE and the new syllabus.

A number of 'first draft' pages for the new syllabus had been previously issued to members of the Conference and the Consultant for RE took members through each page.

On considering the drafting work the following principal points were noted:

- A desire was expressed to keep a Herefordshire flavour to the 'Programme of Study'
- The Early-Middle-Late (EML) grid format would not now be used. Following the change of government the Department of Education (formerly DCSF) had cancelled the introduction of the new primary curriculum which had championed the use of the EML progression grid.
- Ofsted strongly suggested that if guidance for teachers was provided then teachers may be less likely to consult the whole document. The Conference agreed that teachers should be given whatever assistance could be made available and therefore decided that, if possible, the guidance should be retained.
- Conference debated whether greater focus could be given by reducing the current five aims to one main aim with other sub-aims. The Consultant for RE undertook to give further consideration to this.
- Comment was made regarding the consistency of terms used. The Consultant responded that government policy may be clearer by the autumn and he would try to ensure consistency with the policy terms.
- Government policy indicated greater freedom in how schools were set-up and managed e.g. academies, free schools policy, and therefore account needed to be given to the wider range of learning provision.
- Conference considered that a stronger emphasis should be given to the recommended number of hours given to teaching RE.
- Conference debated the other principal religions represented in the county – other than Christianity. The Consultant for RE was requested to review which principal religions should be taught at which Key Stage.
- Questioned whether the Buddhist concepts currently listed should conform to common usage and English spelling, the Consultant for RE responded that they conformed to the guidance given in the national model syllabus.
- Where appropriate more up to date quotations should be used and should include quotes from children.

- The Consultant for RE described some of the pros and cons of using 'How to plan your RE at KS2 using the key questions provided' and 'How to plan your RE at KS2, devising your own key questions'.

The Agreed Syllabus Conference thanked the Consultant for RE for his drafting work and looked forward to further updates.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the direction of the new Agreed Syllabus, indicated in the drafting work now undertaken, be continued and a further report be made to the next meeting.

36. FURTHER WORK TO PROGRESS THE SYLLABUS REVIEW

No further issues were considered.

The meeting ended at 4.05 pm

CHAIRMAN

