

**MINUTES of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held at Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Tuesday, 23rd March, 2004 at 2.00 p.m.**

**Present:** Councillor J. Stone (Chairman)

Cllr Mrs. W.U. Attfield, Mrs. C. Ault, Revd. P. Barlow, Mrs. J. Brown, Dr. M. Goodman, P.E. Harling, Ms. K. Mayglothling, Ms. S. McCamley, Mrs A. Mundy, Mr. Z. Pandor, Mr M. Rollnick and Revd. I. Terry

**34. THE LATE MR. S. BURRAGE**

SACRE were informed by the Church of England representatives of the sudden death of Mr Stephen Burrage, head teacher of Barrow C.E. (Aided) Primary School, Shropshire. As a mark of respect SACRE observed one minutes silence.

**35. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Ms. S. McCamley and Mr J. Rendal.

**36. NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

There were no named substitutes.

**37. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That subject to recording that the meeting ended at 4.02 p.m. the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December, 2003, be approved and signed by the Chairman.

**38. SACRE MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

The Chairman welcomed two new members, Ms C. Ault, Bahá'i representative and Mr Z. Pandor, Muslim representative on Committee A. He also welcomed Councillor Mrs W.U. Attfield, Committee D representative, to her first meeting. He further welcomed Mr M Carter, who would be speaking on item 6 on the agenda, and three student teachers from Marches Consortium – School-centred Initial Teacher training programme.

The Head of Inspection, Advice and School Performance reported that efforts were still being made to seek suitable representatives from other main faiths groups not represented on SACRE.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

**39. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No written questions had been received.

**40. A SURVEY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SOME PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

SACRE considered the outcome of a survey of Religious Education in 10 Primary

Schools, representing a cross section of schools in Herefordshire.

The Head of Inspection, Advice and School Performance Service (IASPS) introduced Mr Mike Carter, retired Primary Inspector and Headteacher, who had undertaken a survey of Religious Education in Herefordshire Schools. Mr Carter reported that with the support of the Board of Education of Hereford Diocese, a list of 10 primary schools, which represented a cross section of schools within the County, had been selected. Of these schools, 3 had been church schools. His comprehensive report had been issued in the agenda for the meeting. He reported that all church schools involved in the survey had opted to use the agreed syllabus. The following is a summary of the findings of the survey:

- Although no observation of teaching and learning in RE formed part of the survey, it was apparent from the evidence being presented to support discussions with the Headteachers and RE Coordinators, (policies, guidelines, schemes of work and samples of pupils' work), that RE was being taught imaginatively and creatively.
- Section 23 inspections of the three church schools visited indicated that RE was well taught and managed and was a particular strength of each school.
- The standard of assessing progress and achievement in RE was high in many of the schools visited, although recently appointed coordinators voice concerns about the management of the process.
- All schools saw RE making an important contribution to citizenship and personal and social development, in which a climate of confidence was created that enabled children to hold, share and question their own and other people's beliefs, values and attitudes. Effective links were being made in some schools between RE and values education.
- Schools worked hard to 'practise what they preach', ensuring that RE had a practical impact and influence within the wider community in which they were set. Some played an active part in community issues that had their roots in the teaching of RE, such as involvement with the Christmas Shoe Box Appeal, participating in a parish plan, supporting the Tengeru Project in Africa and a noticeable improvement in supporting charitable events.
- There was little evidence of sustained opportunities for pupils to benefit from visits to other faith communities or to receive visitors representing other faith groups. The will to develop such links was there, but the practicalities of arranging visits to distant locations for these experiences were costly and time consuming.
- Just under half the schools were experiencing changes in the appointments of RE Coordinators. Training in the management of the subject had been experienced by existing RE Coordinators, but those new to post expressed an interest in training, particularly in the way that RE was assessed and the use and management of RE resources.
- Schools were well resourced to support the teaching of Christianity but most conceded that they probably had insufficient resources to support the teaching of different religions.

SACRE were pleased to note that, overall, schools considered that they were well served by the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education and the Qualifications

and Curriculum Authority (QCA) guidelines for the subject. SACRE debated the problems being experienced by schools in interacting with other faith groups. It was noted that while Herefordshire was seen as being part of the West Midlands, and therefore looked towards Worcester, Birmingham and Wolverhampton, the possibility of contacting faith groups from Gloucestershire and South Wales should not be overlooked. While organising school trips to go and see, first hand, religious customs, buildings and artefacts was commendable, it was suggested that an alternative may be to invite a religious representative, or a group of pupils, to visit the school. This could be extended so that the representative visited a number of schools in the County.

Mr Pandor suggested that the Muslim community in Gloucestershire may be able loan artefacts or occasionally provide a representative speaker.

It was suggested that contact details of various religious groups in the region could be collated and circulated to schools or made available via a website. However, it was acknowledged that the initial compilation of a database may be resource intensive and that the database would need to be up dated on a regular basis. The Head of IASPS requested that he be informed of any funding to undertake such a project.

In relation to training for RE co-ordinators the Consultant for RE reported that a package of training was currently available and that the Working Group had commenced looking at training packages for subsequent years. However, this work had been put on hold pending the outcome of the National Framework for RE.

SACRE thanked Mr Carter for an excellent report and suggested that it be made available to schools in the County. SACRE agreed that this had been a very worthwhile exercise and considered that a similar survey should be undertaken on an annual basis.

**RESOLVED: That report be noted and it be recommended to the Local Education Authority that a similar survey be undertaken on an annual basis.**

#### **41. UPDATE ON SURVEY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

The Religious Education (RE) Consultant reported on the survey of Religious Education in Secondary Schools in the County.

Following on from the previous agenda item the RE Consultant reported that she had visited two secondary schools as part of the monitoring of RE in Herefordshire schools.

She reported that from the evidence collected, the statutory time allocated to teaching RE was being met. While the RE short course tests had been successful, a number of issues concerning post 16 courses had been highlighted. Other issues raised had been the level of support for non-specialist teachers and the level of financial provision for training or supply cover. She commented that there seemed to be little subject co-ordination, or a lack exchange of information on pupils RE experience when pupils moved up from primary to secondary schools. Positive feedback had been received where school cluster arrangements were in operation. She suggested that the RE support to Secondary schools continue; subject specific advice should be made available to RE teachers and Heads of Department; sources of further advice be published and monitoring visits continue on an annual basis with a larger number of schools included in the process.

SACRE noted that following the RE monitoring visit by the RE Consultant a findings report of the visit was sent to the school to assist them with any areas for improvement.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted and it be recommended to the Local Education Authority that a similar survey of a larger number of secondary schools be undertaken on an annual basis.**

**42. REPORT ON QCA CONFERENCE - LONDON 2003**

The RE Consultant reported on issues arising from the QCA Conference in London and included an update on the proposed non-statutory framework for RE.

The RE Consultant reported that the key issue discussed at the conference had been the further development of the 'National Framework for Religious Education'. She explained that the Secretary of State for Education and Skills had considered the draft framework and had released it in mid April for consultation. The framework would provide a model for use by LEAs, SACREs and others, particularly when reviewing the locally Agreed RE Syllabus. The aim of the framework was to raise standards and achievement in religious education by improving teaching and learning; to support pupils spiritual, moral social and cultural development; and develop the contribution of religious education to inclusion. The draft framework had been developed by QCA in partnership with the DfES and a wide range of other partners including faith and belief communities.

She further reported that in addition to making the draft framework available, QCA and the DfES would be holding a series of consultation meetings at various venues.

The RE Consultant also reported that OfSTED's pilot scheme to directly inspect the work of SACREs had progressed. Arising from the pilot scheme work was now underway to develop a SACRE self-evaluation process.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

**43. DRAFT SACRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2004 - 2007**

SACRE were invited to review and further develop the SACRE Development Plan for the period 2004 – 2007.

The Head of Inspection, Advice and School Performance Service (IASPS) reported upon the further development of the SACRE Development Plan and presented a draft plan covering the period 2004-2007 for consideration. He highlighted the 9 key principles, which now included both making appropriate use of ICT (principle 8) and communication with local media (principle 9). He also emphasised that the partnership between the LEA and the Diocesan Authorities was a key principle that underpinned this development plan.

**RESOLVED: That the draft SACRE Development Plan 2004-07 be noted.**

**44. ISSUES ARISING FROM RECENT OFSTED INSPECTION REPORTS**

SACRE received an oral report on issues arising from recent Ofsted inspection of school reports.

The RE Consultant reported that, in the course of analysing the Ofsted reports for last term (autumn), she noted that reports for two primary schools had not met the requirements of the new framework with regard to reporting RE. She explained that in one case, a Voluntary controlled primary school, the published report stated that RE was subject to a separate report (i.e. Section 23 Denominational report) when this was clearly not the case. In another, again a voluntary controlled school, the report stated that 'RE was not a focus for the inspection' and therefore not reported on. She also reported that the issues had been brought to the attention of the Diocesan Authority.

SACRE discussed the reporting issue and gave consideration to a draft letter to be sent to Ofsted drawing their attention to the concern that some Registered Inspectors appeared unaware of the requirements for RE and that the mechanisms for monitoring the work of inspectors and checking the accuracy of reports had not been effective on these occasions.

The Head of Inspection, Advice and School Performance Service briefly commented upon a number of recent inspections and reported that a monitoring report on all schools inspected would be presented to a future meeting.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the Chairman be authorised to write to Ofsted highlighting the monitoring issues described above.**

**45. QCA PUBLICATION ON RE AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

SACRE discussed the main findings and issues arising from the QCA publication 'Religious Education and Collective Worship – an analysis of 2002 SACRE reports'.

The publication provided an analysis of the varied nature and the extent of the work of SACREs during the academic year 2001-2002. SACRE noted references in the publication to the non-statutory national framework for RE. They were also particularly interested in the comments made by other SACREs concerning the impact 'short inspections' were having on the level of information provided by Ofsted in their inspection reports (pages 10 and 11). The publication would continue to provide a useful reference point for the future work of SACRE.

**RESOLVED: That the QCA publication 'Religious Education and Collective Worship – an analysis of 2002 SACRE reports' be noted.**

**46. DELEGATE TO ATTEND NASACRE ANUAL GENERAL MEETING 2004**

SACRE considered a) nominating a delegate to attend the NASACRE AGM in London on 20th April and b) nominating a candidate to serve on the NASACRE Executive Committee.

**RESOLVED: That**

**(a) Subject to no other nomination the RE Consultant be nominated to attend the 2004 NASACRE AGM and;**

**(b) No nomination be made to the NASACRE Executive Committee.**

**47. SACRE ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2004**

Members were informed of arrangements for the Herefordshire Annual RE

Conference 2004 to be held Friday 24th September, 2004.

The RE Consultant circulated a provisional outline of events for the Conference and commented that they had been very fortunate in getting Mr Graham Langtree, RE Officer at QCA to give the key note address. He had also agreed to facilitate one of the workshop events.

The Conference was aimed at teachers, heads, governors and SACRE members and was seen as an excellent opportunity to explore national developments, support teachers in the delivery of RE and to bring together all those with an interest in developing RE in Herefordshire for discussion and the sharing of ideas.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

**48. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP WORKING PARTY UPDATE**

SACRE received an oral report on progress being made by the Collective Worship Working Party in compiling guidance to support Collective Worship in schools.

Mrs J. Brown reported upon two meetings of the Working Party, which comprised of representatives from the primary and secondary school sectors. The first meeting, lead by Angela Daniels, had started to bring together ideas and help on documentation for use by schools. The Working Party had decided that 'Finding Treasurer' would be the theme throughout the guidance. The second meeting had started drafting the guidance notes. It was anticipated that the guidance would be published early in 2005.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

**49. FUTURE MEETINGS OF SACRE TO MAY 2005**

SACRE were invited to note the schedule of meetings for the period to May 2005.

**RESOLVED: That the schedule of dates for SACRE meetings to May 2005 be noted.**

The meeting ended at 3.51 p.m.

**CHAIRMAN**