

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Wednesday, 15 May 2019, County Hall, Worcester,

2.00 pm

Present:

Minutes

Mr Robin C Lunn (Chairman), Mr Graham Bounds, Ms K Cope, Mr Chris Giles, Ms Ellie Hill, Mr M Jenkins, Mr J Loyal, Mrs Christine Parker, Mr K Pollock

Also attended:

Stephen Pett and Kate Griffiths

656 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies for absence had been received from Tasnim Khawaja, Tracy Lister, Kerry Poole, Yvonne Stollard and Lindsay Thorne.

Mr Lunn took the Chair.

657 Confirmation of the Minutes

Minute 650 - Clarification was given that only Chris Giles received cover for one day a month as Regional Ambassador.

Subject to the one amendment the minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the previous meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

658 Agreed Syllabus Revision: revisiting the options

Stephen Pett explained that as the license for the current syllabus would run out at the end of the academic year in August 2020 SACRE needed to consider the 3 options for the new syllabus:

- A. Update and re-licence the current syllabus
- B. Adopt the Model B syllabus
- C. Write a new Worcestershire specific syllabus

As options A and B were the same cost and option C substantially more, the choice was realistically between A and B. Stephen explained the differences between the two syllabuses: Model A contained three main strands with more thematic questions while model B was more systematic and built on prior learning and moving onto thematic questions afterwards. Model B also incorporated work from the Understanding Christianity resource that many schools were using.

A SACRE member commented that from a Sikh point of view the Model B syllabus was preferable because it explained the basics of religions, which included that Sikhs wear certain identifying things at an early stage as well as being more flexible than Model A.

Teachers who attend the conferences in June would be asked their opinion of the syllabuses as would teacher trainees at the University.

RESOLVED that teachers would be asked about their opinion of the syllabus and, following consideration of any comments, SACRE would decide which syllabus to adopt at its Autumn Term meeting.

659 Survey results so far

Only one response had been received to the survey about the new syllabus so far but efforts would continue to be made in order to find out the opinion of teachers before a decision was made on adopting a new syllabus.

660 Finance

Following various enquiries Cllr Lunn had received a reply from Nick Wilson, Assistant Director for Education and Skills in the Children, Families and Communities Directorate, who confirmed that Children's Services would fund the syllabus for 2020-2025.

661 Ofsted Draft Framework

Stephen Pett explained that the new Ofsted inspection framework looked more closely at the curriculum that pupils were following, rather than concentrating on exam results. Ofsted would be reporting if they found a school was failing to carry out any of its statutory duties, so it was hoped that this would help ensure that school complied with their duties towards RE. Schools would be less likely to be able to achieve an outstanding rating if they were only teaching minimal amounts of RE. Ofsted would be looking in depth at 4-6 subjects which could include RE. Inspectors would perceive what was being learnt in schools by talking to senior teachers, visiting lessons and looking at pupils books rather than looking at exam results.

662 Support for Schools

a Regional Ambassadors

Chris Giles explained that he had become Regional RE Ambassador for the West Midlands region last September. The role was funded by NATRE for one day a month, initially for a period of two years. The role involved supporting teachers with RE and helping with networking and enabling them to support each other. The National RE Advisor was apparently concerned about the future of RE but was encouraged by Ofsted's new inspection guidelines.

b	<u>Primary Conference Update</u>	Stephen Pett explained that the Primary Conference would be held at Sixways on 25 May and 30 teachers had already signed up. As well as helping teachers, the conference would be an opportunity for Stephen to ask teachers directly for their opinion on the syllabus. Trainee teachers would have the opportunity to attend the conference for a reduced fee.
c	<u>Secondary Student Conference Update</u>	Chris Giles gave details of the Sixth form conference which was taking place at the University of Worcester. A grant had been received to help with the conference and the University had helped with advertising; all the places had been taken up. Representatives from SACRE were welcome to attend.
d	<u>Secondary Teacher Conference Update</u>	Stephen Pett said that only 7 places had been booked at the Secondary Teacher conference. Reduced cost places for trainee teachers would be made available and the conference would be advertised again highlighting the fact that the conference would help with teaching RE and fulfilling their statutory obligations and therefore would help with future Ofsted Inspections.
e	<u>Hub Groups and Hub Leaders</u>	<p>Kate Cope felt that the Hub Groups were successfully allowing RE leaders to meet up to swap ideas and gain support from fellow teachers. She gave details of a debate on RE which was being organised. The group she had set up was beginning to meet up at other schools and at other times which may encourage wider attendance although the meetings were generally the same people and no community school teachers had become involved. It was hoped that if teachers realised that the Hub meetings could help with SIAMS inspections that more teachers would get involved.</p> <p>Kate was organising one hub group but others groups had been set up such as the one for the Rivers Multi-Academy Trust.</p>
f	<u>Getting Information to Schools</u>	The difficulties of contacting RE teachers directly was discussed even though emails were addressed to RE Leads. It was suggested that a statement be added to forms at conferences that stated that email addresses would be used for future relevant mailings unless the teacher expressly opted out.
663	Responding to GCSE / A Level / School workforce data	Workforce data had been collected regarding the percentage of time individual schools spent teaching RE. A Memorandum of Understanding had been signed between the DfE and Natre that the information about RE would be provided to Natre. According to the data two

to encourage schools to fulfil statutory duties

schools appeared to not provide any RE. Stephen Pett had therefore drafted a letter which could be sent to schools on behalf of SACRE.

SACRE members felt that schools should be sent general information first on what they should be providing and information about what was available to help them, such as support from Chris Giles in his Ambassador role. This information could be sent first in the form of a newsletter and then followed up with the letter a week afterwards.

RESOLVED that Chris Giles and Stephen Pett contact the relevant schools initially and if they did not receive a satisfactory response then should follow up with the letter from SACRE.

664 News Update

Stephen distributed an RE news update:

- The new Ofsted Framework and Handbooks had been published
- Natre were currently meeting with the DfE approximately once a month on behalf of RE Teachers
- The DfE had written to NASACRE, setting out what the Government expects from schools with regard to RE, the Agreed Syllabus and schools not meeting their duties to teach RE. See <http://nasacre.org.uk/file/nasacre/1-97-item-2.pdf>
- National and Regional Ambassadors continue to support RE teachers
- GCSE RS BBC Bitesize launches revision guides for Eduqas GCSE specifications
- The RE APPG has been hearing about excellent RE
- NATRE and Culham St Gabriel's were offering a new 200 hour DfE funded subject knowledge enhancement course www.teachre.co.uk
- Better RE in 1000 project – NATRE had received funding to help Primary Schools to improve their RE. If anyone can recommend hard to reach schools they should contact Mandeep Singh Shekhon at Mandeep@natre.org.uk
- The NASACRE conference and AGM would be held on 22 May in Manchester.

665 Feedback from Members

None

666 Any Other

SACRE had received a letter from the Clerks of Worcester Quaker meeting who were concerned about

Business

Militarism in schools. They had previously written to Robin Walker MP and copied in the Worcestershire Cabinet Member for Education and Skills. They asked if the issue was something which could be considered at the October meeting. SACRE members agreed that they should be invited to the meeting.

RESOLVED that the Clerks of Worcester Quaker Meeting be invited to the Autumn Term meeting of SACRE.

667 Future Meeting Dates

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 2 October 2019.

The meeting ended at 3.55pm

Chairman

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