

## Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

### Thursday, 9 June 2016, County Hall, Worcester - 2.00 pm

#### Minutes

#### Present:

Mrs Lindsay Thorne (Chairman), Mrs Sue Askin, Ms Stephanie Boulter, Mr Graham Bounds, Ms Ellie Hill, Dr John Lally, Mrs Tracy Lister, Mr Robin C Lunn, Mrs Christine Parker, and Dr Yvonne Stollard.

#### Also attended:

Kate Griffiths, Barry Newton, and Stephen Pett.

#### 550 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies for absence had been received from Chris Giles, Ian Hopwood, Tasnim Khawaja and Kerry Poole.

As no members of Group C were in attendance the meeting was not quorate. It was decided that the meeting should go ahead, however any decisions made by the 3 groups in attendance would need to be ratified by Group C following the meeting.

NOTE: This agreement was received after the meeting.

#### 551 Declaration of Interests

None

#### 552 Confirmation of the Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2016 were agreed to be a correct record of the previous meeting.

#### 553 Funding

Barry Newton explained that when Learning and Achieving had been commissioned out to Babcock that SACRE had been included. The transfer had occurred on 1 October 2015.

Babcock had now confirmed that they would honour last year's agreement which SACRE had with the Local Authority. Therefore for 2016/17 SACRE would receive:

£1700.18 from 2015/16 and  
£8616 for 2016/17;  
Resulting in a total of:  
£10,316.18

The Government's direction of travel by 2019 as indicated in the white paper, was that the majority of schools would become academies. This would mean that there would not be a school improvement service although admissions would continue to have a role and

the Local Authority would be a champion for parents and children. These changes were likely to mean that there would be less money available for SACRE.

In light of this it was recommended that SACRE use the money it had available after paying for RE Today to build capacity and plan to build support for teachers by improving school to school support. The hub system suggested by RE Today would therefore be a good way of planning to increase capacity for the future.

In response to questions it was clarified that there was no certainty about the budget for subsequent years but it would be best to plan for a substantial reduction. Under the local authority it had never been possible to carry forward an underspend so it would be best to assume that the money would be lost if it were not used this year.

Stephen Pett clarified that the law had not been changed to remove SACREs but some now received little or no support from Local Authorities. Some SACREs received lots of funding while some existed through the work of volunteers. The RE commission was half way through its research into the position of SACREs.

Stephen felt thanks were due to the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Barry for pursuing the outstanding funding.

The Chairman suggested that for Worcestershire SACRE to continue members would do more between meetings.

**RESOLVED that SACRE:**

- a) Noted the current funding position for 2016/17 and**
- b) Agreed that the best way to use the money was to build capacity and support for teachers as funding was likely to reduce in future.**

**554 Feedback from Primary Conferences**

RE Today had organised a conference on 7 June for Primary schools. The feedback received from attendees was very positive (see attached).

Three teachers had offered to take part in a 'speaker's corner' event where they spoke about a particular event or project they had taken part in or organised in their schools.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to the Head Teachers of the three schools to thank them for the contribution of

their teachers.

At present only 2 Worcestershire Secondary schools had signed up for the Secondary Conference. Stephen had emailed the invitation to all his contacts in schools three times and Steph Boulter agreed to send the invitation round to all the Church schools. It was pointed out that emails sent to the Head or Office should get to the correct person if they were marked for the attention of RE Co-ordinators. Ellie Hill agreed she could display a poster at the university or pass it on to teachers on the training course.

The Chairman suggested that Members could act as contacts and their names be put in emails for schools to contact.

South Bromsgrove school held a conference in March. It was hoped that RE Today could work with South Bromsgrove to hold a joint conference next year.

**RESOLVED that SACRE noted the positive comments from attendees and thanked RE Today for its organisation of the Conference.**

**555      How to support schools who do little or no RE**

It was difficult to tell which schools did little or no RE. Sending out surveys would not illicit a response from schools who do not normally attend training. Stephen felt it would be best to concentrate on building capacity and work on setting up hubs so that support and good practice could be spread through networks of teachers.

The Chairman agreed that some teachers may not be attending conferences because they had difficulties in attending whereas some were not interested. Setting up and supporting networks would be the best way of reaching teachers who were interested but who found it difficult to attend training or conferences.

**RESOLVED that SACRE agreed to support RE Today with setting up hubs to enable teachers to work together and provide support for each other.**

**556      Building Local Hub Leaders**

Stephen explained that RE Today were planning to implement the Cullum St Gabriel's Excellent RE programme. Teachers would need three and a half days training a year. The recommended amount of training was between 15 and 50 hours but it was felt that 15 hours was more achievable.

The model had been set up elsewhere and produced

**557      Legal  
Judgement on  
Non-Religious  
Worldviews in  
RE**

positive results. It did not concentrate on best practice but was about getting teachers to work together to improve quality in all their schools.

Ideally teachers from 5 community schools and 5 church schools should pair up and receive the training and materials to be able to set up network meetings. Between the training days which were spread out with one per term, the task would be to set up their networks. NATRE offered support to local groups for no fee and Cullum St Gabriel's paid for supply teachers and Stephen's time.

Ideally the training would start this term but the timescale was tight so it was likely that the first half day session would be early in the autumn term and be followed by a full day later in the term.

Members discussed the difficulty in keeping up to date with the creation of multi-academy trusts, but Stephen felt it would be best just to go with area networks.

Barry agreed to mention the training at the Head Teachers Representatives group he attended – a flyer would be helpful to give to the teachers at the meeting on 30 June. Ellie Hill also agreed to distribute a flyer to her contacts. She also felt it was worth considering whether the training could be used as part of the RE quality mark.

**RESOLVED that SACRE members all agreed that the funding should be used to set up the system of hub leaders by allowing RE Today to run the necessary training.**

The High Court had ruled that the new GCSE Religious Studies specification made an error in stating that the new RS GCSE would meet the legal requirements for the provision of RE. The Humanist Society had sponsored parents to fight the case that the GCSE could be taught by not teaching a non-religious world view. The judgement stated that "the state must accord equal respect to different religious convictions and to non-religious belief".

Stephen explained that the new syllabus included a unit on Humanism and encouraged exploration of non-religious world views. He assured SACRE that if it became necessary to update the syllabus, RE Today would issue an amendment.

**RESOLVED that SACRE were confident that RE**

**558 National RE Update**

**Today would monitor the situation and issue an amendment to the syllabus if it became necessary.**

Stephen Pett explained that the National RE news was included in the agenda.

He highlighted the following:

- A conference on 8-9 October was being organised by the National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE), the Association of RE Inspectors, Advisors and Consultants (AREIAC) and the Association of University Lecturers in RE (AULRE). The conference was designed to bring together people at all levels of RE teaching.
- The specifications for A level and GCSEs were now available for teaching in September 2016,
- The RE Council were proceeding with their commission on RE.

**RESOLVED that SACRE noted this update.**

**559 Feedback from Members**

The Chairman told members that she had received feedback that the RE Today book 'Religious Education: The Teachers Guide' was very useful and contained practical suggestions for teachers.

**560 Any Other Business**

John Lally announced that he was retiring from SACRE and this meeting would be his last. Steph Boulter had known John since the 1980s and in that time she felt he had not changed in the way he was dedicated to working for the Children in the Birmingham Diocese.

The Chairman thanked John for the hard work he had put into SACRE over many years.

The Chairman stated that SACRE membership would be monitored and members who had not attended 3 meeting would be contacted and a further attempt would be made to fill the vacancies on the SACRE.

**561 Future Meeting Dates**

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 4 October at 2pm at County Hall Worcester.

The meeting ended at 4.00pm

Chairman .....

**Worcestershire and Herefordshire SACRE Primary RE Conference 2016**  
**7<sup>th</sup> June Worcester Racecourse: EVALUATIONS**  
**40 delegates; 34 forms returned**

	excellent	good	satisfactory
<b>Session 1 Thoughtful, knowledgeable RE</b> Stephen Pett (33 responses)	<b>88%</b>	<b>12%</b>	
<b>Workshop A Teaching Christianity, Islam and Judaism with 4-7s</b> Fiona Moss (17)	<b>88%</b>	<b>12%</b>	
<b>Workshop B Teaching religions through texts and stories</b> Stephen Pett (17)	<b>76%</b>	<b>24%</b>	
<b>Speakers' corner</b> Tracy Lister, Jo Smith, Sarah Pearson (28)	<b>82%</b>	<b>18%</b>	
<b>Final session: Create, talk, sing!</b> Fiona Moss (30)	<b>80%</b>	<b>20%</b>	
<b>Venue: how do you rate it?</b> (34)	<b>65%</b>	<b>35%</b>	
<b>Overall value of the conference</b> (34)	<b>85%</b>	<b>15%</b>	

**Further comments (Representative sample)**

- A fantastic course – great to hear ideas for lessons and share my own. Inspiring. Reassuring for things we already do in school. Motivating for next steps. Thank you.
- Wonderful to have the opportunity to be given lots of ideas to make the syllabus come to life.
- Always good practical ideas, many of which I will use and always great to meet other RE teachers and share ideas.
- It was a very quick day, full of engaging teaching ideas. Can't wait to have a go.
- Lots of ideas I can take back into school and implement in my own teaching. Good to talk to colleagues about their own practice.
- Super ideas of activities to use practically to engage and challenge the children. Thank you very much.
- Excellent ideas that are easy to implement and transfer to different stories/religions.
- Really good to have publications to look through and buy. Loved listening to people from other schools to share ideas – would have loved handouts from them.
- This is the 3d I have been to and the best by far. The speakers' corner was especially useful, as I think network groups would provide the same practical advice if they were available. It was a friendlier (smaller?) event this year and less theoretical. Lots of great ideas to use – playdough! Film clips using 5 senses to make poems; draw the story etc.(Herefordshire)
- Very interesting and great ideas, advice and guidance for teaching RE.
- Love the practical activities – very engaging for us. Like how the activities are cross-referenced to the syllabus. Lots of good ideas to use back in school.
- A really good day. I have lots of ideas to take back and will try to implement them, A practical engaging and fun day.
- Enjoyable to meet with other teachers and discuss RE and school life in general. Like lots of the ideas and strategies suggested across all sessions, but especially during the speakers' corner. Important to maintain the profile of RE.
- Great to be able to see/hear in comfort. Very engaging mix of look, listen, discuss, do, reflect. Very useful lesson suggestions which tie in with AS and provide high quality learning opportunities. Specifically like 'text & stories' ideas which can be applied to different situations, not just 'one off' ideas.
- As a new coordinator the course was highly beneficial. Great resources and ideas.
- Speakers' Corner was really useful – thanks to all who presented.
- The sharing of good practice was brilliant but far too short. More time would have been nice.
- A valuable course – really enjoyed the Workshop A, some great ideas to use in the classroom.

### **Actions you will take to follow up from this conference (Representative sample)**

- Further training for staff – check their understanding of various religions. Incorporate super creative ideas more.
- Share with colleagues who teach RE. Use ideas to become more creative.  
Will purchase Christmas book to help to develop understanding of this Christian festival over year groups – have been searching for ideas. Will use some of these activities in units.
- Feed back to staff in PDM. Implement some of the practical ideas in my teaching.
- Have RE inset next year.
- Teacher training day showing staff teaching ideas and exploring units of work. Introducing big question songs.
- Draw up whole school overview; relay back to staff; ask to purchase books/get whole-school TED course.
- The poetry formation from the first session will be repeated for my next lesson observation!
- Transfer all info and ideas to incoming RE teacher; share ideas for cross-curricular links with all staff.
- Immediate links to SOW with ideas from today – add to year group folders and put on network; plan carefully resources needed for next year and order now; plan how to share key ideas, esp related to SMSC; sort Christmas and Easter!
- Deliver a staff meeting to share ideas and evaluate how the syllabus has been taught over the year.
- Enter NATRE art competition; download resources and organise.

### **Suggestions/requests for future support in Worcestershire and Herefordshire? (Representative sample)**

- School links – possible links with a school with high ethnicity/inner city. We are an eco, semi-rural small school with 3 pupils who are not white British.
- Multi-faith days.
- Lists/pool of multi-faith/non-religious visitors to schools to be interviewed.
- List of suitable places of worship for children to visit for Hinduism, Islam and Judaism
- Do we have a database of speakers from a range of faiths who would be willing to come into schools?
- Links for school visits and visitors; matching of schools.
- Opportunity for teachers to exchange ideas/worksheets/own powerpoints
- Worcs booklet with addresses and phone numbers of places of worship and a bank of visitors from different faiths who could visit?
- More support needed to work on child-friendly 'I can' statement addressing the skills of RE with a view to inserting them into the front of books for assessment purposes. End of KS statements could be broken down, I feel.
- Would there be a possibility of a loan service for resources/artefacts? Perhaps a forum/website to share ideas/lessons?
- More discussion about assessment
- Keep this Agreed Syllabus – don't change it on 2020! Too many changes – let's embed this and get great quality RE rather than more organising and shuffling of paper and creating yet another long term plan.
- Continue link with RE Today – an efficient way of resourcing RE with material written by hands-on experts, unlike much on the web.
- More support for effective assessments in RE – to keep work minimal for already busy teachers.
- Ideas for visits to places of worship; successful workshops to provide first-hand experience of different religions; continued CPD opportunities
- Early years RE resources for new curriculum
- Meetings with other RE co-ordinators or teachers – EY to Y6