

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Monday, 10 February 2020, County Hall, Worcester - 2.00 pm

Minutes

Present:

Mrs Lindsay Thorne (Chairman), Mr Graham Bounds, Ms Kate Cope, Mr Ade Couper, Ms Rebecca Davidge, Ms Danielle Evans, Mr Chris Giles, Mr Matthew Jenkins, Mrs Tasnim Khawaja, Mrs Tracy Lister, Mr Jatinder Loyal, Mrs Christine Parker, Mr Ken Pollock and Dr Yvonne Stollard.

Also attended:

Mr S Pett, RE Today - Adviser to SACRE
Kate Griffiths -Committee Officer

679 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies had been received from Robin Lunn and Ellie Hill.
Rebecca Davidge attended for Ellie Hill.

680 Confirmation of the Minutes

Jatinderpal Loyal requested that the word 'ceremonial' be removed from paragraph 2 on page 2 of the minutes.

Subject to the one change, the minutes were agreed to be a correct record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

681 Welcome to New Members

The Chairman welcomed Ade Couper, to SACRE. Ade was a Quaker and would join Group A. Ade explained that there had been Quakers for around three and a half centuries and were one of the non-conformist groups which had arisen around the time of the Civil War. The Quakers wished to promote peace and had won a Nobel Peace Prize. They worked to stop the arms race and climate change and worked to improve equality. The Quakers worked nationally and locally by going into schools and other community settings and had representatives on the Interfaith Forum.

Danielle Evans was also welcomed to the meeting as one of the new Church of England representatives; she was a teacher at Wolverley Secondary School.

682 Agreed Syllabus Review

SACRE had voted at its last meeting to adopt the Model B syllabus from September 2020. The forewords were currently being written and the introduction to the new Syllabus explained how it linked to the last syllabus. There was still scope for local pictures to be used in the Worcestershire version of the syllabus so SACRE members were asked to send pictures of local places of

683 Launch Conference(s)

worship to Stephen Pett by 20 March.

The Launch Conference for the new Syllabus had been organised for 1 June and would be held at Sixways Stadium in Worcester. Teachers who attended the conference would be given access to information which could be downloaded for future use and a workbook would be provided. Different workshops would be held which would be relevant to different age groups. The Conference would explain how the new syllabus would meet the requirements of the Ofsted framework.

A discussion was held over the merits of holding a joint primary and secondary conference or splitting the conference. SACRE members felt it would be more useful to have a joint conference as it would allow teachers of different phases to understand the full syllabus and what would be taught at different stages. The conference would be useful for all teachers to attend as the new syllabus was a substantial change to the current one. The new syllabus gave more emphasis to systematic study before the religions were compared meaning it would be clearer for pupils.

The conference would be a valuable networking opportunity as well as giving teachers an introduction to the syllabus and providing support materials.

It was clarified that the new syllabus had been written by RE Today who had worked with Faith Groups meaning that Worcestershire was buying an 'off the shelf version' this time rather than being involved in the writing of the syllabus as it had been with the first version. SACRE would not need to contribute to the cost of the launch conference as it was being organised by RE Today and paid for by the delegate fees.

684 Continuing Professional Development

Chris Giles reported that a fantastic regional conference had been held in Birmingham. The feedback from attendees had been positive and he thanked Dr Stollard and Jatinder Loyal for attending. Jatinder agreed that it had been well attended and the market stalls had been informative and useful for new teachers. It was proposed that a similar system of a market place of different faiths could be used at the Syllabus Launch.

Rebecca Davidge reported that bursaries were available for teacher training and subject knowledge enhancement courses in RE at Worcestershire University. There was currently a University of Cambridge initiative at Worcester

685 Information from Schools

Sixth Form to encourage students studying sociology and philosophy to go on to study religious education.

The teachers' Hubs in Worcestershire were continuing to meet there was one in Malvern, one for secondary teachers and the Rivers MAT.

There would be a conference at the University of Worcester on 22 June for students studying GCSE RE.

The GCSE results for Worcestershire had been good even though the overall numbers taking the exam had fallen. The numbers taking A levels had fallen but most schools needed to have a minimum number of pupils before they could run an RE course.

It was a requirement that all schools taught RE but some of them only taught it through PSHE. One SACRE member felt that pupils needed to be shown that an RE A level could be helpful in a range of careers. It was acknowledged that some parents also needed to have their perceptions of RE challenged so they would be more likely to support their child if they showed an interest in choosing to study RE.

Two secondary schools had been sent letters from SACRE asking what RE was being taught in their schools; one had responded that RE was taught through their life studies course and the Head Teacher wished to attend the launch of the new syllabus on 1 June; and further attempts would be made to contact the other school which had not responded.

[NOTE: following the meeting the school did respond with information on how the school taught RE]

686 National News Update

Stephen Pett explained that lots of schools appeared to be struggling with the new Ofsted requirements and that during inspections they were being asked for things that had not previously been part of inspections. Inspectors were now looking in depth at up to six subjects in secondary schools and the subjects could include RE. Some schools which began teaching GCSE RE before year 10 were being rated as 'requires improvement' and schools were being told that they did not look at subjects in sufficient depth and that content was being rushed. They needed all courses to be similar in breadth and ambition. The teaching members of SACRE confirmed that subject leaders were expected to take ownership of their subjects and raise standards. Schools which had previously been rated outstanding and would not have

687 Feedback from Members

received inspections were now being re-visited.

There had been a challenge against a school in Oxfordshire about the duty for collective worship – an out of court settlement had been reached.

In Wales it had been proposed that parent’s rights to withdraw their children from collective worship should be withdrawn. According to EU regulations that would violate the rights of parents.

The NASACRE 2020 Conference will take place on 18 May in London.

Dr Stollard

- Heartstone Story Circles was a Project which aimed to address racism and xenophobia in a unique way. 400 schools in the country were involved, including Parkside in Worcestershire, and it was supported by Government and the police. In some areas it was used as part of Prevent. The project used stories to generate discussions, bring people together and reduce isolation. SACRE members were asked to consider how they could support the project and it was suggested that details could be passed to teachers who attended the Syllabus Launch conference on 1 June ready for the project to start in the autumn.
- As the Jewish rep on Worcestershire SACRE, Dr Stollard attended Buckingham Palace in December for a reception for the Jewish Community.
- Holland House was hosting an event on 24 March for Hindus and Buddhists – Opening Eyes to Each Other.

Jatinder Loyal

- Faith leaders had been invited to the World Economic Forum to discuss working for safer communities.
- The EcoSikh project planted trees wherever possible. The last big planting of trees took place in Coventry.
- Managing Climate change was discussed at the United Nations
- Sikh Free Kitchens worked towards ending world hunger.

Lindsay Thorne

- On 28 June there would be a Faiths Festival at

Holland House.

Tracey Lister

- Year 6 at her school were working on the Global Neighbours accreditation scheme organised by Christian Aid.

Tasnim Khawaja

- The Bromsgrove and Redditch Welcomes Refugees project had been successful in helping refugees settle in the area and now two people, originally from Syria were going into schools to speak of their experiences.

688 Future Meeting Dates

DATES 2020

Wednesday 10 June 2020

Thursday 15 October 2020

Chairman