

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
Wednesday, 21 October 2015, County Hall, Worcester,
2.00 pm

Present:

Minutes

Mrs L Thorne (Chairman), Mrs S Askin,
Ms S Boulter, Mr G Bounds, Mr C Giles, Ms E Hill,
Mrs T Khawaja, Mrs T Lister, Mr R C Lunn, Mr N Mills
and Dr Y Stollard.

Also attended:

Kate Griffiths, Barry Newton and Stephen Pett

Available papers

The members had before them the Agenda papers and minutes (previously circulated) and a copy of the agenda would be attached to the signed minutes.

**526 Apologies for
Absence and
Substitutions**

Apologies had been received from Ian Hopwood and Christine Parker.

Norman Mills informed the Council that the meeting would be his last. He and his wife would be leaving Worcestershire on 9 November for 1 year to serve as missionaries in East Grinstead. His Church Leader was looking to find a replacement representative for SACRE.

The Chairman also passed on the sad news of the death of a former member of SACRE, Mrs Sylvia Braddy.

**527 Declaration of
Interests**

None

**528 Confirmation of
the Minutes**

It was agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting on 9 June 2015 and were signed by the Chairman.

**529 Feedback from
Syllabus
Conferences**

Stephen Pett reported that there had been very positive feedback from the teachers who had attended the launch conferences for Primary schools on 21 and 22 May. Teachers who were members of SACRE also reported that they had already been able to make use of 2 of the units covered at the conferences and they had been very successful. Teachers appreciated that the new syllabus allowed them to 'dig deep' rather than skim over a topic.

Stephen Pett had taught all teachers for a day at St Georges and St Luke's in Redditch. In total around 140 schools would have been to the conferences.

**530 2016 SACRE
Conferences**

The secondary conference on 24 June at County Hall had also been very positive and several academies had attended. The Chairman Vice-Chairman and Stephanie Boulter had attended had confirmed it was a useful day for teachers.

RESOLVED that SACRE note the positive feedback received regarding the conferences and thank Stephen Pett for organising and running them.

Stephen Pett outlined the plans for conferences in 2016. The Primary Conference for Worcestershire was planned for 7 June, with one for Herefordshire on 8 June. Two speakers would be booked and it would involve teachers who were implementing the new syllabus who could pass on best practice. It was confirmed that the conference would be organised by RE Today and would not cost SACRE anything.

The secondary conference was planned for 23 June and would be a joint conference with Herefordshire. The venue was still to be decided.

The conferences would be promoted by contacting the schools who had previously attended conferences and also through the Diocese and by sending information to Head Teachers.

The Chairman requested that SACRE members try to attend the conferences if possible.

RESOLVED that the plans for the 2016 conferences be noted.

**531 Future of
SACRE**

Ideas from Members

Members were asked for suggestions for future activities for SACRE to support. The following ideas were suggested:

- i. Worcester Cathedral had recently held an event which had been popular with students, where a panel of representatives from different faiths responded to questions from students. A similar panel event had been held in 2011 at South Bromsgrove School. Gloucester had held an event whereby different faiths had tables and students could circulate to speak to representatives from different religions,
- ii. A primary school in Dudley had held a debate. It

was felt a similar event could be held in Worcestershire with questions from the new syllabus as a starting point,

- iii. SACRE Members were keen to investigate the idea of a 'Young SACRE,' perhaps discussing their ideas of RE or SMSC. The Chairman felt it would be useful to investigate support from REC who had a 'Youth Ambassadors' pilot programme.

Ideas from RE Today

Stephen Pett suggested an 'Excellent RE' scheme whereby RE Today train teachers for 3 ½ days to become local RE leaders. This could form part of the teachers continual professional development and funding was available to cover their lessons while they were training. Ten teachers could be trained and then in pairs – perhaps a church school with an academy - they could organise network meetings to pass on what they had learnt. Therefore one block of training would lead to 5 network meetings and more schools could be reached.

SACRE members thought this was a positive idea and would complement existing arrangements such as moderation meetings held by the Diocese and the network meetings already organised by Stephen (three of which would be organised for next year). It was felt that teachers would feel supported by the proposed scheme. However the success of the scheme would depend on finding the right pairs of teachers and them having supportive Head Teachers.

Funding

The Councillors wondered whether the bodies represented around the table could contribute to the funding of SACRE projects. For example County Councillors held a discretionary fund which could be used in a particular area of the county.

Norman Mills explained that the faiths were all charities which meant there were restrictions on how money could be spent, but for particular projects it may be possible. Also most trusts would not give money for religious activities or statutory duties.

It was known that the Westhill Trust gave a bi-annual award of £4,000 and they seemed to be interested in projects involving parents.

532 Funding Proposal - Experience Interfaith

Babcock

Barry Newton reported that the Learning and Achievement section of the county Council had now been commissioned out to Babcock, so he was not now an employee of the Local Authority. He was not yet aware of what impact the change would have on SACRE.

RESOLVED that SACRE:

- a) Noted the various ideas for future activities and should consider how these ideas could be taken forward;**
- b) Support Stephen Pett and RE Today's proposal of 'Excellent RE';**
- c) Considered various funding sources and members were encouraged to investigate any possible sources of funding available from their particular nominating bodies; and**
- d) Would receive an update report on these issues at the next SACRE meeting.**

Tracey Lister explained that Whittington Primary had previously held Interfaith days and they had considered trying to gain funding for activities during Interfaith week 15-21 November. It was decided there was not enough time to look for external funding for this year however information could be collected and a resource set up which could help schools with Interfaith information without the need for extra funding.

The information collected could be made available to schools via drop box, in a hard copy format or on-line. There was some concern that if a web page was created someone would need to be paid to keep it up to date. This prompted the proposal that pages may be available through NATRE or the Diocese.

The resources would be based on the new syllabus. Tracy explained that she had started with some information about Christianity but would like some help with the other religions.

SACRE Members recognised the hard work that had already been done but felt that it was important that the work be current and checks needed to be made to ensure that this was not duplicating resources already available. The Chairman mentioned that some information was available on visiting places of worship but that it needed to be checked to see that the contacts were still relevant.

Yvonne Stollard agreed to help with information on Judaism; Tasnim Khawaja on Islam and Sikhism and Lindsay Thorne on the Bahá'í faith.

RESOLVED that SACRE thank Tracy for the initial work done on the Interfaith project and other members were encouraged to contribute where they were able.

533 The new Syllabus - A Tracking System developed by St Richard's Cof E First School

Stephanie Boulter explained that St Richard's first school had developed a tracking system which helped teachers with end of key stage statements and covered all the requirements for SIAMS. The system could compare results for boys and girls, or how children with August birthdays compared to their classmates. The system could show where children were falling behind and therefore could assist teachers with their planning. A training day would be held at the Old Palace.

RESOLVED that SACRE noted the development of this new system and would receive further feedback at a future meeting.

534 Joint working with Herefordshire SACRE

The Chairman gave an update on possible joint working between Herefordshire and Worcestershire SACREs. The Chairman of Herefordshire SACRE was retiring but it would still be possible in future that the two SACRES could work on joint ideas and hold joint conferences.

RESOLVED that SACRE noted this update and that the idea of joint working be raised again once Herefordshire had a new Chairman.

535 National RE News

Stephen Pett distributed some information about National RE news.

- The number of students taking the full course RE course had risen by 25% but the number of schools with no RS students at all had increased with up to 40% of schools not entering any students for RE exams. This echoed research by the National Association of Teachers of RE (published 2013) that a third of community schools and academies without a religious character were failing to meet their legal or contractual agreements to provide religious education a key stage 4,
- A report by Linda Woodhead and Charles Clarke 'A new Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools

was launched in July, it had suggestions that would involve changes to the role of SACREs but RE Today had been assured that the Government had no intention of changing the legislation around teaching RE, at present,

- There had not been any further information published about the new GCSE and A level specifications,
- A conference was being held in London on 26 November – RE for Real about what young people leaving school should know about religion and belief. Recommendations will then be made available.

RESOLVED that:

- a) SACRE note this update,**
- b) Chris Giles present would present further information on exam results at the next SACRE meeting and**
- c) the report 'A new settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools' would be considered at the next SACRE meeting.**

536 Feedback from Members

None

537 Any Other Business

None

538 Future Meeting Dates

Meeting dates for 2016 are:
Wednesday 16 March
Thursday 9 June
Tuesday 4 October

All to take place at 2.00pm at County Hall.

The meeting ended at 4.10pm.

Chairman