

Minutes of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious

Education

County Hall, Worcester

Thursday, 8 June 2023, 2.00 pm

Present:

Cllr. Mel Allcott (Chair), Cllr. Matthew Jenkins (Vice -Chairman), Mr Graham Bounds, Mr Chris Giles, Rev. Duncan Hutchison, Mrs Jenny Lockwood, Cllr. Emma Marshall, Ms Aimee Parsons and Dr Yvonne Stollard.

Also attended:

Kristy Passmore, Stephen Pett, Kate Griffiths, Lisa Bradbury and Cllr Tracey Onslow

770 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies had been received from Danielle Evans, Sheila Hicks, Tasnim Khawaja, Jatinder Loyal and Christine Parker.

771 Confirmation of the Minutes

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

772 RE at Norton Juxta Kempsey School

SACRE received a presentation from Kristy Pasmore, RE Co-ordinator from Norton Juxta Kempsey Primary School, who explained how RE was seen as a core subject and had a very high profile at the school. There was a lot of interest and enthusiasm for the subject and the skills which were taught as a basis for RE were transferable to most other subjects.

Cartoon characters were used who had different methodology and methods for example Have a go Hugo and Ask it all Ava, allowing pupils to engage in the interactive and inquiry-led approach. The School also held RE special days with topics such as Holy Communion and RE Big Bible Day.

Feedback was gathered from pupils and showed that 100% enjoyed RE, and they got to ask questions while taking part in a range of activities such as art, music, listening to stories and taking part in visits.

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Date of Issue: 25 September 2023

Date of Implementation:

SACRE was also told about activities which took place to celebrate Interfaith Week, with topics including 'how does your faith inspire you to care for our world' and 'how do special texts guide you in your life'. In 2022 the school registered their week with the Inter Faith Network, the only one in the area.

In the ensuing discussion the following comments were made:

- The school could consider entering artwork completed by the pupils in the Spirited Arts
- The encouragement of critical thinking showed an interesting link between RE and science. The focus on questioning and critical skills could spread to other subjects and highlighted the benefit of RE
- Generally parents had been supportive and none had requested that their child should be removed from RE lessons. Parents were invited to the school for a messy Church event
- The Cabinet Member with Responsibility suggested that SACRE should encourage other schools to register with the Interfaith Network when holding Interfaith Week events
- It was agreed that success for older students came from a good grounding in early years so it was felt that High Schools would be lucky when the students from Norton Juxta Kempsey progressed to them
- It was hoped that other schools would be able to visit Norton Juxta Kempsey and learn from its high level of religious literacy. It was suggested that the RE Hub website could help teachers to access centres of excellence. The Diocese could also help to organise such visits.

773 RE Hubs

Chris Giles, the West Midlands Hubs Lead, demonstrated the new RE Hubs website which was a resource for SACRE members as well as RE Teachers. By sharing information such as school speakers or places to visit the website would become an invaluable resource. Local groups, speakers and places of worship were being encouraged to register. Speakers could take part in the training course and register to get the kitemark so that schools can have confidence in those who visit and speak in their schools. The Calendar would be populated with events as they become known.

The following comments were made:

- Members agreed to tell their networks about the website.
- It was agreed that as well as people being registered as willing to speak in schools, organisations could agree to refer schools to suitable people who were not on the website.
- One Member explained that the training for school visitors was aimed at quite a basic level and was appropriate for those with little or no experience. It the course was completed, visitors could be referred to further courses if necessary.
- The suggestion that teachers or SACRE Members, should be able to register for updates such as when events within a particular area were added to the calendar, or to receive a regular newsletter, was welcomed

- It was suggested that recommendations for places to visit could be added to the website.

774 SACRE Support Request Letter

The letter written by the Chairman and sent to Nigel Huddleston, Harriet Baldwin and Robin Walker was included in the agenda papers. Nigel Huddleston had forwarded the response he had received from Nick Gibb. The RE Policy Group were looking at the data included in the response and wished to challenge it as despite what was claimed in the response, there was clear evidence of a shortage of RE Trainees. Recruitment figures had been good in 2020/21 due to COVID but had been poor in the previous 10 years. It was important that a bursary was made available to encourage more RE Trainees.

RESOVED that responses from Harriet Baldwin and Robin Walker be chased up and a letter was sent back to Nick Gibb challenging the figures in his response.

775 Additional Support to schools - SACRE Finance

In the past year SACRE funding had been used for two day-long courses and SACRE was asked what they wished to spend the funding on this year.

Two proposals were put forward:

- 1) A practical resource which would be available for all schools. This could include cut away boards of 'What happens in ? 'There would be a bulk deal for 200 schools,
- 2) Pupil Course days. A Secondary School could be a host school and invite 6-8 other schools to bring teachers and up to 10 pupils each. A Primary school could act as host for Primary Schools and invite other teachers and pupils to attend. The pupils who attend the conference would then be able to take their knowledge back to their school and cascade it to other pupils.

There were some concerns that the Pupil days may only interest schools who were already engaged, and also that a Primary School may not be big enough to host such an event. Suggestions were made that a Secondary school could host the Primary event or perhaps a North and South version was necessary.

It was agreed that posting out a resource would be easier and in return for the resource, schools would be asked to send the details of their RE Contact at the school.

RESOLVED that for 2022/23 the resource would be delivered to schools and the Pupil Course day could be considered for next year.

776 Monitoring RE - Responses to the Primary Survey

There had been limited feedback from the survey but it was decided there was little merit in asking again for feedback as it was unlikely to produce a

response. It was agreed that it was difficult to reach the correct person in each school and no one had the time to phone schools to ask for contact names.

RESOLVED that it was decided to leave further follow ups and schools would be asked to give a contact name in return for free resources.

777 Feedback from the Primary Conference - 23 May 2023

Stephen Pett explained that the Primary Conference had taken place on-line and 18 people from 15 schools had attended.

It was appreciated that online training for a full day was difficult and tiring.

RESOLVED that ideas for the next Primary Conference be discussed at the next meeting and would concentrate on what would be helpful for teachers.

778 Update from Local RE Groups

- Meetings had been held by the Rivers Group and their meeting on 22 June, being held at St Clements, would be attended by Catherine Atkinson.
- There would be a Diocese meeting held the following week
- On 20 June Becky Davidge was hosting a meeting at the University of Worcester
- On 22 June would be a Three Counties Secondary Conference at Puckrup Hall, which would cover World Views, Global Christianity and Non-religious Worldviews. No schools from Worcestershire had registered to attend.
- On 26 June the Worcester Hub were holding an on-line meeting which would be attended by Zameer Hussein and Becky Davidge

779 National RE News

Members noted the National RE News. The information would be sent to Worcestershire Schools. It gave details of free resources and training.

780 Feedback from Members

None

781 Any Other Business

The Spirited Arts Exhibition would be held at South Bromsgrove High School on Friday 23 June for First, Middle and High schools.

Worcester Interfaith Forum were planning a Pilgrimage event at Worcester Cathedral for Interfaith Week 2023.

782 Future Meeting Dates

The next meeting would be held on Monday 9 October 2023, at 2pm, at County Hall.

Chairman