

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) held in Committee Room 1B, County Hall, Durham on Thursday 6 March 2014 at 1.30 pm

Present:

Canon L Burton (Chairman) In the Chair

Church of England

Revd. J Jewsbury

Other Religious Denominations and Faiths

N Barker	- The Salvation Army
S Brown	- Assemblies of God
W Gray	- Buddhism
J Kidd	- Methodist Church
I Osborne	- Roman Catholic
Bhakti Rasa Dasa	- Hinduism
C Spencer	- Bahá'í Faith

Teachers Associations

S Baker	- NUT
A Hartley	- NASUWT
S Lupton	- RE Curriculum Group

County Council Representatives

Councillor M Dixon

Specialist Inspector (Religious Education)

Isobel Short

1 Introductions, Welcome and Apologies

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from V Bain, J Bainbridge, Councillor J Blakey, C Callaghan, V Gallant, Councillor S Iveson, D Mowbray-Pape, J Nicholls, J Pallister, I Hunter Smart and P Welch.

The Chairman advised Members that D Sadlik and J Katsambis had both tendered their resignation. The Chairman would send a thank you card on behalf of SACRE to both members.

Members were also advised that V Gallant would replace D Sadlik as the Judaism representative and that SACRE now had a Quaker representative who is J Nicholls.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in relation to items of business on the agenda.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2013, were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to some minor grammatical changes and the insertion of 'additional SACRE' to the top of page 3 so that it reads cost for the time of additional SACRE monitoring.

4 Matters Arising

The Chairman referred to the meeting which was held between Councillor Dixon, Miss Bainbridge, Canon Burton, Isobel Short (The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education) and Phil Hodgson (Strategic Manager Support and Development). At this meeting they discussed the 9 days of The Specialist Inspector's time for SACRE which did not include SACRE's annual report which was a statutory obligation.

They also discussed at the meeting the possibility of SACRE writing the report which the Chairman rejected as it needed to be a professional document, as it was in the public domain which would be under the Durham County Council banner. It was suggested that the SACRE annual report be submitted to Cabinet and that they needed to speak to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services.

The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education indicated that she did not think it was Phil Hodgson's intention that no monitoring of primary schools would take place and indicated that some sample monitoring could take place for a short period of time through Education Development Service if requested by the RE Inspector.

The Chairman indicated that her recollection was that given the large number of primary schools, monitoring of primary schools had to be ongoing and this information would be needed for the annual report.

W Gray suggested that Primary Monitoring for SACRE could also be built into the service. She also suggested that rather than focus on funding, the Task Group look more at the service. They had been allocated 9 days per year of time from the Specialist Inspector for Religious Education for SACRE, no primary monitoring and the Annual report could be written by the Inspector as a Cabinet report. The next task group meeting could look at how they could support the Education Development Service and find a way forward.

Councillor Dixon suggested that he and the Specialist Inspector for Religious Education work together to find some appropriate wording for this section of the account of the meeting.

C Spencer sought clarification on the number of requests which had been received for withdrawal from Religious Education.

The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education responded that she had not received any requests since the last meeting.

5 Presentation from a Member of the Humanist Society

The Chairman advised Members that this item would be considered at the next SACRE meeting.

6 Chair's and Vice Chair's Comments

The Chairman advised SACRE Members that the PGCE course in Religious Education that she teaches at Durham University is to be closed and the current students would be the final ones.

She read out a letter to SACRE Members which she had had published in the Church Times on the cessation of the course.

SACRE members discussed in detail the impact of the course no longer being offered and it was suggested that SACRE send a letter of protest to various organisations.

The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education reminded SACRE members that the remit of SACRE is to advise the local authority on matters relating to RE and collective worship and they needed to ensure they did not go beyond this remit. She did say that the removal of the course would have an implication for Durham schools but more research would need to be done in the future to confirm this.

She suggested that SACRE could ask about the qualifications of teachers in Durham schools to ascertain the quality of training and advise the Local Authority.

The Chairman advised SACRE Members that she and Councillor Dixon had met with the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services to discuss the annual SACRE report being submitted to Cabinet.

Councillor Dixon discussed the outcome of the meeting with Members, in particular that the annual report should be submitted to Cabinet from a Council Officer rather than the Specialist Inspector. The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services had indicated that he would discuss the issues with the Head of Education but the decision would be made by the Corporate Director of Children and Adults Services.

W Gray suggested that the next Task Group meeting should discuss the SACRE Development Plan and the feedback from the Portfolio Holder be incorporated into this meeting.

7 Where Did AT1 and AT2 Go?

Isobel Short gave members a presentation on Where did AT1 and AT2 Go? (for copy of slides, see file of minutes).

The Chairman thanked The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education for her very informative presentation and gave SACRE Members an opportunity to ask questions.

Resolved: That the presentation be noted.

8 Enquiry Project and Interfaith Conference

The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education presented the circulated interim report on the Enquiry Project and Interfaith Conference and advised members that they were now moving forward to the next phase of the project where schools would meet up and visit faith communities outside the region (for copy see file of minutes).

Paul Welch had taken on a lot of the day to day management of the project and would be running the next meeting.

SACRE members who had attended the Interfaith Conference gave very positive feedback on the conference.

The Chairman asked if the children involved in the project would be in attendance at a future SACRE meeting as indicated in the minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2013.

The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education responded that she could look into the possibility of a presentation by the children at a future SACRE meeting.

9 RE Inspector Report

The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education presented the circulated report which was a summary of the support in RE provided by the RE Inspector since September 2013 (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved: That the report be noted.

10 Date of the next meeting

The next meeting of SACRE would be held on 5 June 2014.