

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) held in Committee Room 1B, County Hall, Durham on Thursday 4 June 2015 at 1.30 pm

Present:

P Welch (Chairman) In the Chair

Church of England

N Chapman and D Mowbray-Pape

Other Religious Denominations and Faiths

N Barker	- The Salvation Army
W Gray	- Buddhism
J Kidd	- Methodist Church
I Osborne	- Roman Catholic
Bhakti Rasa Dasa	- Hinduism
C Spencer	- Bahá'í Faith
M Turner	- Islam

Teachers Associations

V Bain	- RE Curriculum Group
S Lupton	- RE Curriculum Group

County Council Representatives

Councillors P Brookes and M Dixon

Specialist Inspector (Religious Education)

Isobel Short

1 Introductions, Welcome and Apologies

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting in particular D Lawson who was a Humanist representative and was in attendance to observe the meeting. C Forbes was also in attendance as an Observer. Everyone introduced themselves and gave a brief description of their background.

The Chairman advised members of the resignation of J Jewsbury and members wished to convey their thanks to him for his contribution to SACRE and wish him well for the future.

Apologies for absence were received from J Bainbridge, S Baker, V Gallant, A Hartley, J Nicholls, J Pallister and K Passmore.

2 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2015, were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 Declarations of Interest

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

4 Matters Arising

Members sought clarification on the resignation of S Brown. The Clerk advised members that she had written to S. Brown to convey best wishes on behalf of SACRE and to advise him that members would like him to remain as a member of SACRE as they valued his contribution. The Clerk advised members that no further correspondence had been received and it was agreed that Councillor M Dixon would write to him and send a card on behalf of SACRE.

I Osborne referred to Minute No. 8 and the SMSC and British Values Conference and asked if there was any information in relation to British Values.

The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education responded that British Values would be actively promoted in all schools and not just taught. She also advised members that she would re-schedule the presentation that she unfortunately had to cancel. There was also a seminar on 15 June 2015 to look at British Values and SACRE had a part to play in how it would be promoted in schools.

Members discussed British values and the Chairman suggested that this area be discussed in more detail at the SMSC and British Values training event.

5 Chairs Comments

The Chairman referred to the new GCSE and A level specifications and advised members that the examination boards were behind schedule which was a concern for those teachers who taught over a 3 year curriculum.

The Chairman indicated that he was a senior examiner for the examination board Edexcel where it was confirmed that no legacy specification will be offered from 2018. He advised members that the examination board WJEC were offering a course with three components which was an hour exam worth 25% a 2 hour exam worth 50% and another 1 hour exam worth 25%. He also referred to the requirement now to teach 2 religions.

The Chairman also thanked everyone who had supported SACRE in particular those who had attended the working groups and who would be attending the SMSC and British Values conference to be held on 15 June 2015. He was very grateful for their time and commitment.

6 Report of Working Groups

The Chairman advised members that two of the working groups had met since the last meeting.

The notes of the SACRE Development Working Group meeting held with C Spencer, D Mowbray-Pape and J Bainbridge had been circulated to members prior to the meeting.

C Spencer and D Mowbray-Pape presented the outcome of their meeting and members discussed the contents of the minutes and suggested that the Communication Working Group look at marketing SACRE.

Members discussed the future of SACRE as schools were now being taken out of local authority control and they don't have to buy into the authority's services so what would be the role of SACRE.

The Chairman indicated that the Communications Working Group had met and produced an annual report which would be considered under a separate agenda item.

The Chairman advised members that a response had been received from Lord Nash which was impartial due to the election. K Passmore had suggested to the Chairman that a further letter be sent to Lord Nash.

7 RE Inspector Report

The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education gave a PowerPoint presentation (for copy of presentation see file of minutes).

The presentation looked at the following:-

- RE Networks
- RE Hubs
- All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on RE – Chair Stephen Lloyd lost his seat.
- Expert Advisory Group (EAG) had produced some curriculum materials based on the RE framework.
- GCSE Changes from 2016
 - Exam boards are working on draft specifications.
 - First teaching would be September 2016.
 - First exam summer 2018.
 - Implications for those who teach RE over 3 years.
- NASACRE AGM held in May 2015
Charles Clarke was the Key Note Speaker and asked the following questions:-
 - Is the current statutory framework the right one to promote RE at the current time?
 - Should RE be statutory at all?

- Should RE be part of the national curriculum?
- Should RE be nationally or locally determined?
- What should RE be called?
- Should it continue to be statutory from age 5 to 18?
- What is the role of SACRE?
- Should the right of parental withdrawal from RE remain?
- What about parents who want religious instruction rather than religious education?
- Is change needed?
- What should happen about Collective Worship?

Members discussed the contents of the PowerPoint presentation.

Resolved: That the presentation be noted.

8 Initial Teacher Training providers for Religious Education

The Chairman referred to the closing down of the PGCE course at Durham University. There were however, opportunities at the Carmel College, Darlington and the Shotton Hall SCITT has 3 places for RE trainees from September 2015 and there were no applications at present.

The Chairman and the Specialist Inspector for Religious Education were meeting to see how SACRE could ensure that people applied for the positions as they could not write to members of parliament about the issue if places were available and people were not applying.

9 SACRE Draft Annual Report 2014

A copy of the draft annual report for 2014 had been circulated to SACRE members for approval.

The Chairman thanked the Specialist Inspector for Religious Education, W Gray and Cllr Dixon for all their help in producing the report.

Members discussed where the report should go and it was suggested that a few figures and charts be included into the report and be made more attractive to read.

The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education asked that paragraph 7.2 of the report be amended so that '50%' was removed so that it read 'The calendar year 2014 was thus the first full year of this reduction in professional support'.

SACRE members agreed to formally adopt the annual report with some minor amendments.

10 Date of the next meeting

The next meeting of SACRE would be held on 5 November 2015.