

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) held in Committee Room 1B, County Hall, Durham on Thursday 5 November 2015 at 1.30 pm

Present:

P Welch (Chairman) In the Chair

Church of England

K Passmore

Other Religious Denominations and Faiths

N Barker	- The Salvation Army
V Gallant	- Judaism
J Kidd	- Methodist Church
J Nicholls	- Society of Friends (Quaker)
J Pallister	- Roman Catholic

Teachers Associations

A Hartley	- NASUWT
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

Apologies for absence were received from V Bain, J Bainbridge, S Baker, N Chapman, W Gray, I Osborne, Bhakti Rasa Adhikhara and M Turner.

2 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 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

Councillor Dixon referred to the minutes of the previous meeting and advised members that he would shortly be contacting S Brown on behalf of SACRE as discussed.

5 Chairs Comments

The Chairman advised members that V Bain was now a NUT representative on Durham SACRE and not the RE Curriculum Group. The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education would be appointing a new representative to the RE Curriculum Group.

The Chairman also advised members that regrettably D Mowbray-Pape had tendered her resignation as a member of Durham SACRE which meant that there were now three vacancies on the Church of England Group.

K Passmore indicated that she had some contacts who may be interested in becoming Church of England representatives on Durham SACRE who she would contact and advise SACRE and the Church of England Group accordingly.

Councillor Dixon sought clarification on the County Council representatives and if these could be altered. SACRE members indicated that they were happy for these representatives to be altered if this was possible.

The Chairman referred to the four religious education teacher training places that were offered at Shotton Hall Academy, which they were struggling to fill last academic year. The Hermitage Academy also has a teacher training place available for religious education this academic year and the training is provided by Shotton Hall Academy.

The Chairman and the Specialist Inspector for Religious Education had met to see if SACRE could support Shotton Hall Academy to fill these spaces.

The Chairman had sent an e-mail to surrounding universities in relation to the vacancies but had not received a huge response. No university in the North East offers religious education teacher training, the nearest is York St John. He also advised members that there was a national bursary available.

SACRE members discussed the ways in which they could help fill these training places. The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education advised SACRE members that they could offer support but she did not know how much marketing they could carry out on behalf of the Academy.

Jo McShane who was in charge of training at Shotton Hall Academy would be in attendance at the next SACRE meeting to discuss the matter with members.

Councillor Dixon referred to the British Values Conference and sought clarification on the feedback. The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education responded that

they had done a question time panel and the feedback received was that this was a good session and the Humanist representative in attendance had been welcomed.

K Passmore referred to the photograph that had been taken at the British Values Conference and asked if a copy could be obtained. The Chairman indicated that the photograph could be used in the next SACRE annual report or a newsletter.

The Chairman referred to the working groups that had been set up last year which worked well but it was difficult to get everyone together. He sought clarification if they were still the way forward or if members wanted to set up a joint working group. Members discussed the working groups in particular the need for a flexible membership and that the working groups be opened up to all members. It was agreed that arrangements be made for a joint working group meeting to be held on Wednesday 9 December 2015.

The Chairman referred to the circulated response from Lord Nash in relation to future funding and the role of Durham Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). Members discussed the contents of the letter, in particular in relation to the future of SACRE in view of academies. Members sought clarification on the number of secondary schools in Durham and how many were academies.

The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education advised that there were 32 secondary schools and 4 Roman Catholic secondary schools, half of which were academies and half community maintained. In 2012 all academies paid to buy into the agreed syllabus but she was not sure if schools would buy into the Durham Agreed Syllabus in the future.

Members discussed academies and C Forbes who was an observer from Sunderland advised members that Sunderland no longer had advisors and 14 out of the 17 schools were academies and they also have a Multi Academy Trust. One of the academies did not offer Religious Education at Key Stage 3 but academies have to deliver Religious Education. She had sent a letter to school governors responsible for religious education and enclosed a copy of the leaflet from NASACRE. They had also hosted a network meeting and invited academies at no cost for the first meeting. SACRE were responsible for all children regardless if an academy.

The Chairman suggested that Durham SACRE write to school governors and also enclose a copy of the NASACRE leaflet. It was suggested that the letter also include what services the local authority could offer.

6 RE Inspector Report

The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education presented the circulated report which was the RE Inspector Report for the Autumn Term 2015 (for copy, see file of minutes).

The report looked at the following:-

- Durham RE Networks - Primary Network held on 29 September 2015 and Secondary Network held on 21 October 2015
- Network Attendance – Analysis of attendance at Durham’s Secondary RE networks over the last year
- RE Courses – New to Teaching RE/Geography/History, Teaching Christianity, GCSE RS Conference
- RE Contracts – Demand for one-to-one support and requests for training and support in developing effective SMSC and the promotion of British values
- School Queries – The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education continued to be contacted by school leaders on a range of queries relating to parental queries about the nature of RE and/or collective worship/assemblies and the withdrawal of their children from RE and/or Collective Worship.
- Annual Interfaith Week from 15-21 November 2015

Members discussed the contents of the report in particular the attendance at the network meetings.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

7 Interfaith Week

The Chairman referred to the Annual Interfaith week in England which would take place from 15 to 21 November 2015. He asked SACRE members for their thoughts on SACRE organising an event which would be held after Interfaith week due to time constraints.

S Lupton talked about the various activities she had arranged at her school for Interfaith week.

SACRE Members discussed the options available and agreed that a working group be set up to arrange an event to be held next year.

Resolved: That a working group be set up to look at organising an event for Interfaith week.

8 Provision for RE Age 14-16 (Key Stage 4)

The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education gave a PowerPoint presentation on Religious Education/Religious Studies for Key Stage 4 (for copy of presentation, see file of minutes).

During the presentation members were advised that Religious Education was statutory at Key stage 4 and always had been.

Traditionally GCSE/O Level Religious Studies was the same hours of teaching as other GCSEs. Non-examination compulsory Religious Education for all was one lesson a week. Durham Agreed Syllabus had a programme of study for non-examination CORE Religious Education.

In the Mid 1990s, Ofsted was introduced and schools were held to account if not meeting statutory duty to provide CORE Religious Education which led to change with the introduction of Short Course Religious Education to be taught to all with accreditation for all who entered the exam. This led to a huge increase in numbers across the country of students being entered for an exam in Religious Education. Sometimes the full course in Religious Education was not offered at all, the short course was offered to all but not taken seriously.

In 2010, there was another shift in schools where only a full course mattered as to how a school was judged and a short course did not count towards the school data. A lot of schools were now teaching a full course in core time which was one hour a week which meant there was not enough time to cover the course and get good results. Others were only offering CORE Religious Education as part of a PSHE programme based on ethics and some were ignoring the law and not offering Religious Education at all.

2016 would see new GCSEs which would be more rigorous and all exams would be taken at the end of Year 11.

SACRE Members were asked to think about how SACRE should respond, what should they recommend and how this affected the Agreed Syllabus revision, the subject would be discussed in more detail at the next meeting.

Resolved: (i) That the presentation be noted.

(ii) That the Provision for RE at Key Stage 4 be discussed at the next SACRE meeting.

9 Date of the next meeting

The next meeting of SACRE would be held on 3 March 2016.