

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) held in Committee Room 1B, County Hall, Durham on Thursday 3 March 2016 at 1.30 pm

Present:

P Welch (Chairman) In the Chair

Church of England

N Chapman, K Passmore and R Sansom

Other Religious Denominations and Faiths

J Bainbridge	- Methodist Church
I Osborne	- Roman Catholic
J Pallister	- Roman Catholic
Bhakti Rasa Dasa	- Hinduism
C Spencer	- Bahá'í Faith
M Turner	- Islam

Teachers Associations

S Baker	- NUT
S Lupton	- RE Curriculum Group

County Council Representatives

Councillors P Brookes and M Dixon

Specialist Inspector (Religious Education)

Isobel Short

Voluntary and Community Sector Officer

Ian Hunter Smart

1 Introductions, Welcome and Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from V Bain, V Gallant, A Hartley, J Kidd, Revd D Lindley, J Nicholls and P Snowden.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting in particular R Sanson and C Newton who had recently been appointed on Durham SACRE. Everyone introduced themselves and gave a brief description of their background.

The Chairman also advised members that Revd D Lindley and P Snowden had also been appointed as Church of England representatives.

2 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 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 Durham County Council representatives on SACRE and indicated that he did not feel that the representatives needed to be altered at present.

5 Chairs Comments

The Chairman referred to the format of meetings and that a meeting of the working group had been held before Christmas where it had been suggested that SACRE Members break out into working groups within its meeting. These working groups would focus on particular issues as identified in the agenda.

The Chairman referred to the draft letter which had been circulated with the agenda which he had produced in conjunction with the Specialist Inspector for Religious Education and had drafted on behalf of Durham SACRE to be circulated to Head Teachers and Chair of Governors to provide some information and updates about Durham SACRE, as discussed at the last meeting. They had evaluated the leaflet from NASACRE but felt that it was more suitable to academies and sought Members thoughts on producing their own leaflet to be distributed with the letter.

Members discussed the letter and suggested some minor amendments. The Chairman indicated that he would amend the letter and work with the Specialist Inspector for Religious Education to produce a leaflet which would be sent with the letter.

6 RE Inspector Report

Members considered the report of the Specialist Inspector for Religious Education which was the RE Inspector Report for the Spring Term 2016 (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

The report looked at the following:-

- Durham RE Networks
- Teaching RE in PPA Time
- The New GCSEs
- GCSE RE Conference
- Teaching Christianity
- Agreed Syllabus

- National Documents on Religious Education
- GCSE Religious Studies Questionnaire Analysis

Members discussed the contents of the report.

C Spencer sought clarification if schools have to pay for a delegate to attend the Durham RE Networks. The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education indicated that if the school had a service level agreement then there was no charge. If no agreement was in place it would cost £80 per delegate.

Councillor Dixon sought clarification about academies that had not bought a service level agreement. The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education responded that the Education Development Service work with any type of school (maintained/academy) who have bought a service level agreement.

S Baker referred to Teaching Assistants who deliver RE in PPA time, in particular that a different way should be found to ensure qualified teachers deliver RE. Members then discussed the role of Teaching Assistants and RE related support that can be considered for them in this role. Members discussed this issue in detail and the Chairman suggested that this could be discussed as a discussion topic at the next meeting.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

7 Discussion Item 1: Islam in Schools

The Chairman asked Members to divide into two groups and for each group to discuss one of the discussion topics which were 'Islam in Schools' and 'Changes in Key Stage 4'.

Following the group discussion of 'Islam in Schools', the Chairman indicated that they had discussed lessons about Islam at a County Durham primary school that sparked an anti-Islam protest.

The group also discussed their concerns about the reaction to teaching of Islam in schools and suggested that SACRE write to EDS to create a stronger mandate for education and community cohesion and suggesting a training event for Heads, Governors and Community Leaders to give a greater understanding of Islam and how to deal with issues.

The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education referred to SMSC which includes British Values and that a seminar had been held in June 2015 on British Values. This included a question time panel made up of different faith members in order to focus on the British Values of mutual respect and tolerance of all faiths and beliefs. The evaluation of the seminar showed a particularly positive response to the input from the question panel which included members of SACRE.

Members commented that the issues had a lot to do with the media and misrepresentation.

8 Discussion Item 2: Changes in Key Stage 4

Councillor Brookes Chaired the discussion group on 'Changes in Key Stage 4 (KS4)' and the following key points were raised during the discussion:-

The purpose of RE at KS4 is not consistently clear: is it an academic milestone qualification for future employment? Or is it 'core RE', the legal requirement to deliver RE as per development and preparation for adult life?

Schools make the decision via their timetabling provision and sometimes they are trying to mix the two purposes with an academic subject being taught with insufficient time or clarity.

Schools need to make the decision about which fight to take on. Is RE available to all pupils with a personal slant or is it an option for a full academic course?

This scene was complicated by its insertion with citizenship and PSH(C)E in some schools.

Durham RE Syllabus currently has no provision for a KS4 non-GCSE option.

The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education had provided a paper summarising the options that may be offered by schools currently so that SACRE could appreciate the current situation in preparation for the content of the RE syllabus revision in 2017.

The group looked at whether the new syllabus should provide a recommended curriculum for non-exam KS4?

The group decided that there needed to be guidance on statutory requirement, what the school could offer and how this could be taught to show progression through levels of progress. Whichever option was chosen needed to meet statutory requirements.

New GCSE specifications required a lot of content and subject knowledge and needed to ensure continuity back through into Key Stage 3 to build required knowledge on what was sometimes restricted time. The bridging unit was great but some of the units may need tweaking.

The new agreed syllabus needs to address assessment clearly with continuity in terms of how you assess student progress.

It was suggested that SACRE proactively follow up contact with Heads and Governors to ensure that the expressed purpose of the syllabus is clear and schools are encouraged to support that internally through staffing and timetable.

9 Date and Time of Future Meetings

The Clerk asked Members to agree the following dates for future meetings of SACRE for 2016/17:-

Thursday 9 June 2016
Thursday 3 November 2016
Thursday 2 March 2017

Members considered amending the commencement time of the meetings from 1.30 pm to 1.00 pm.

Resolved: That the 2016/17 meetings of Durham SACRE be arranged as detailed above to commence at 1.30 pm.