

At a meeting of the STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION held at the SANDHILL CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on MONDAY 29 SEPTEMBER, 2014 at 5.00pm.

Present: -

Church of England

-

Teacher Associations

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Christian and Other Denominations

Ms C. Nicol
Mr L. Brewer
Rev. G. Phillips

Local Councillors

Councillor Stewart
Councillor Williams

In Attendance

Annette Parr - School Improvement Team
Cathryn Forbes -
Debra Bond - Governance Services Officer

As the meeting was inquorate, the following discussions could not be viewed as having been approved and therefore, could not be acted upon until approved at a future quorate meeting.

SAC7 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P. Smith and Mr T. Khan.

SAC8 Minutes

It was AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2014 be approved as a correct record.

SAC9 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

SAC10 SACRE Membership/Representation of SACRE

Members would recall that at its last meeting SACRE discussed strengthening the membership of the Committee. Annette stated that she had liaised with the Roman Catholic Diocese who acknowledged that they needed to become involved. Annette was meeting with them later in the term.

Annette was also awaiting contact from Rowan Ferguson from the Anglican Diocese regarding membership and Councillor Stewart had agreed to source someone from the Bangladeshi Community.

SAC11 Outcomes from Agreed Syllabus Action Plan

An update was provided on the launch of the Agreed Syllabus. Members were advised that the launch was attended by 9 secondary schools and 61 primary schools.

Members were advised that the response to the launch had been positive and that secondary schools were looking towards creating networks to join up their working. They were also looking into examination courses and short courses.

Similarly, Primary schools were looking at creating networks and planning units around different faiths. It was suggested that in the Summer term SACRE could potentially look at bridging units between primary and secondary schools and showcase displays in various places.

Members were of the opinion that buying into Durham County Council's services would be favourable if it meant that RE in Sunderland would benefit.

Mr Brewer enquired whether Judaism was included in the curriculum in Sunderland. Cathryn advised that locally, Sunderland did indeed teach Judaism and Islam at KS4 and confirmed that Judaism was on the syllabus as one of the faiths that schools

must teach. It was also confirmed that some primary schools in Sunderland teach Judaism.

Copies of the Agreed Syllabus were circulated and Members were referred specifically to page 61 which outlined concepts in Judaism. Members were also advised that Page 35 of the Agreed Syllabus identified the core religions that must be taught in schools and at what stage.

SAC12 Future Support for SACRE

Cathryn Forbes from Farrington Academy was introduced to the Committee. Members were advised that Cathryn had been secured for a limited amount of time to provide professional support to SACRE in Sunderland. It was intended that over the forthcoming eighteen days Cathryn would shadow Isobel Short from Durham to oversee how its SACRE operated and share their good practice with Sunderland.

Cathryn stated that during initial discussions with Isobel, it had been suggested that Sunderland become affiliated with the National Association of SACRE's (NASCARE). NASCARE was reportedly a non-profit organisation which was aimed at supporting SACREs to fulfil their responsibilities. The cost to become affiliated was £95.00.

Cathryn provided Members with an overview of the role of NASACRE and advised how their help could impact on Sunderland.

A discussion was held in relation to promoting religious (RE) education in schools. During which, Members agreed that it would be useful to engage with academies. It was also considered that governing bodies of schools could monitor the teaching of RE in schools.

Members suggested producing a newsletter to distribute to all chairs of governors. It was also proposed that a report be included within the agenda booklet on SACRE encouraging link governors to participate in RE in schools.

The Chair supported both ideas and indicated that as part of the agenda booklet report, a self-assessment exercise could be included. As part of the assessment schools could be asked to identify the religions that they teach. He stated that SACRE could also produce a newsletter and something for the School Governors Spring Term agenda booklet.

Annette stated that she would liaise with Colin Byers regarding the suggested proposals.

An update regarding these matters would be raised at the next meeting.

SAC13 GSCE Outcomes

Cathryn provided Members with an update regarding the national picture in relation to RE. In doing so she advised that Ofsted had a clear agenda about diversity and culture. There had been an approximate 8% reduction in the take-up of R.E courses overall with more girls than boys studying R.E. Members were also advised that 5.4% of pupils sat a GCSE R.E exam which was higher than the percentage of pupils that sat a geography exam. The Joint Council for Qualifications had published statistics which were now available nationally their website.

Councillor Williams enquired how Sunderland compared nationally. In response, Cathryn advised the information specifically in relation to Sunderland was not available, however it was intended that comparisons would be made in future.

Mr Brewer enquired how comparisons could be made against achievements in other Cities such as Leeds and Manchester. In response, Cathryn advised that a national overview would be produced and its purpose was to allow comparisons to be made across all schools.

SAC14 Date and times of future meetings

In view of the fact that the meeting was inquorate, a further meeting was convened to take place on Thursday, 4 December, 2014 at 5.00pm.

Future meetings were scheduled as follows: -

Monday 19 January 2015

Tuesday 5 May 2015

All meeting would be held at 5.00 pm at the Sandhill Centre.

(Signed) P. STEWART
Chairman