

At a meeting of the STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) held at the SANDHILL CENTRE on TUESDAY 16 JUNE 2009 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Mr. C. Short in the Chair

Church of England

Reverend G.M. Beck
Father C. Collins
Mrs. W. Lundgren
Mrs. C. Nicol

Christian and Other Denominations

Mrs. S. Slater
Ms. K. Shipley
Mrs. E. Whitfield
Mr. J. Bhatt

Teacher Associations

Miss A. McChesney
Mrs. C. Gibson
Mrs. T. Laybourne

In Attendance:-

Margaret Ferrie	-	School Chief Inspector
Maria Parkinson	-	Democratic Services Officer
Miranda Robinson	-	RE Support Advisory Teacher

The Chairman noted that the meeting was not quorate and that the minutes and any decisions would need to be ratified at the next meeting.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors P. Smith and C. Gofton, Mrs. L. Richardson, Mr. C. Hobbs, Mr. S. Singh and Ms. J. Judson.

Minutes

It was AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2009 be approved as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of apologies for absence from Mrs. C. Gibson and Mrs. E. Whitfield.

Appointment of Member

The Chairman reported that the National Association of SACRES had confirmed a new Member Cloud Singh (representing the Sikh faith) to join SACRE.

However the request would need to be deferred until contact had been made with the Member.

It was AGREED that the application for membership be deferred.

Bursaries Update

The Chairman reported on the following Bursaries:-

Blackfell Primary School

Blackfell Primary School had received a grant from SACRE which enabled them to have an exciting multi faith week.

The faiths studied were Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam, Judaism and Christianity.

Years 1 and 2 had looked at the Buddhist faith through stories and looked at a variety of artefacts.

Year 3 had completed their study of Judaism and made their own Torah scrolls. They had handled many artefacts including typical early games that Jewish children might have played. They had also looked at Christianity and the links between the two faiths.

Year 4 had looked at Sikhism and Hinduism and had a visiting presenter to talk about marriage ceremonies and other customs. The children dressed up in national costumes and dramatised traditional stories. They had visited St. Robert's CLC and created animations of Sikh stories.

Year 5 had focused on the Islamic faith and had a visiting presenter to show them Islamic patterns and the part they played in that faith. They considered Islamic art and their work was framed and put on display. This class also worked on the 5 pillars of Islam and they produced a film of themselves 'performing' the 5 pillars through gymnastic display.

Year 6 undertook mini projects on all the faiths and looked at places of worship, festivals and holy books. They focused on the importance of having respect for all faiths and the choices people make.

A display of all work had been set up for Open Evening and the comments from parents were very positive as they themselves learnt much from the photos, IT presentations, art and written work.

Hastings Hill Primary School

The Bursary award had helped to pay for transport to Sunderland Gurdwara for Year 5 and Sunderland Minster for Years 3 and 4 and visits were planned to Laygate Primary in South Shields for the autumn term as well as further visits to places of worship.

Barnwell Primary School

All Years 5 and 6 were to visit Bede's World on 22 June 2009.

Thorney Close Primary School

Religious Education plans were proceeding at the school.

Biddick Primary School

It was confirmed that a Christian class was to be established on a lunchtime.

Usworth Colliery Primary School

The SACRE considered a report and DVD presentation from Caroline Nicol on the Usworth Colliery Primary School Year 4 Easter Story Project. She stated that dramatising the Easter story had helped the children to focus on the main people and gain an understanding of their feelings and motives, and practising the drama helped embed the sequences of events and meaning behind the story of Holy Week.

The children had shared their work with their parents and local clergy in an evening presentation.

The Year 4 visit to Durham Cathedral was also paid for from the grant provided by SACRE. The children were given the opportunity to soak up the Cathedral's rich Christian heritage and watch a DVD about its history.

Caroline Nicol thanked SACRE for their help and assistance in delivering the

project.

The Chairman thanked Caroline Nicol and welcomed the engagement with the school children in the Easter project. Members of the SACRE noted that it was good to see the outcomes of the Bursary funds and hoped that there might be the opportunity to share the project with other schools.

Monkwearmouth Site Heritage Status

Ms. Robinson reported that there had been discussion on education materials for Wearmouth/Jarrow Abbey and the following themes had been considered:

- faith transforming society and culture
- a centre of communication and learning in the 7th century
- an age of spirituality and pilgrimage
- why the monastery was set up and how it impacted on the landscape and society

The project would need to complement Bede's World and there would be opportunities for using the outside as a classroom and for spiritual development.

Think Tank Update

Ms. Ferrie reported that a meeting of the Think Tank was to be held on 17 June 2009 and work was underway with teachers to produce educational resources for Key Stage 3. The project had great potential and once developed would be disseminated to provide resources to teaching staff across the City.

Annual Report 2007-2008

Ms. Ferrie reported that the documentation in relation to examination results was still to come.

The Chairman commented that it would be important for SACRE to deliver the 2008-09 Annual Report.

Ms. Ferrie undertook to discuss with Ms. Robinson monitoring and evaluation.

In reply to a question from Mrs. T. Laybourne regarding Interactive Self Evaluation forms (SEF) for schools, Ms. Ferrie commented that under the new SEF, schools would need to consider how the issue of faith was addressed in each community.

Role of Advisory Teacher

Ms. Ferrie advised that the role of the Advisory Teacher included development of the Monkwearmouth bid and the newly agreed syllabus.

Ms. Robinson reported that there were a number of areas to address on the current syllabus:

- National Framework for Religious Education to adopt a concept based approach.
- Synergy was needed between what was taught and what was assessed.
- There was a local need to ensure Hinduism and Judaism were included in the syllabus.
- There needed to be an understanding of inclusion, sensory impairments, different cultures and English as a second language.

Ms. Robinson reported that an Annual Conference for Religious Education was planned for 9 July 2009.

The INSET day would show how a revised Sunderland Agreed Syllabus for RE could be developed to plan lesson activities which were relevant and engaging and provide opportunities for all pupils to make progress in the subject. It would include a brief discussion of the rationale behind the new curriculum for primary and secondary schools and consider examples of lesson activities and resources to support good RE.

The aims of the Conference would be:-

- To explore the implications of the new secondary curriculum for RE and the proposals for the primary curriculum in Sunderland schools.
- To consider, exchange and develop ideas for more 'compelling and creative learning' in RE within new Programmes of Study.

The Vice-Chairman expressed concern that a Head Teachers Conference might clash with this date and Ms. Robinson noted that the organisation of the Conference had been restricted to certain dates. Staff responsible for Religious Education would be invited to the Conference and a database established of relevant contacts. The Conference would be an opportunity to discuss a shared vision for an RE syllabus for Sunderland.

Curriculum Reform Consultation – Non Statutory Guidance on Religious Education

The Chairman stated that this document had been circulated to the Advisory Group for information.

Current Budget

The Chairman reported that there was £11,500 still remaining in the budget. Ms. Ferrie reported that a consultant was to be recruited to undertake an evaluation task. She undertook to circulate the information to SACRE and to commission work in October 2009.

Ms. Ferrie suggested that joint workshops could be organised on an area basis, with a Think Tank created for strategic support.

Mrs. Laybourne suggested that good practice in schools could be shared and Ms. Ferrie agreed that there was a need to work with RE practitioners and share resources.

Having thanked Members and Officers for their attendance, the Chairman then closed the meeting.

(Signed) C. SHORT,
Chairman.