

At a meeting of the STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) held at the SANDHILL CENTRE on TUESDAY, 20TH JUNE, 2006 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Mr. C. Short in the Chair

Councillors Mrs. P. Smith, Stewart and T. Wright.

Christian and Other Denominations

Mrs S. Slater	-	Jewish
Mrs. E. Whitfield	-	Free Church
Mr. G. Smith	-	Free Church
Miss C. Robson	-	Roman Catholic
Mr. S. Singh	-	Unity Organisations (Multi Cultural)

Teacher Associations

Ms. A. McChesney	-	National Union of Teachers
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In Attendance:-

Mrs. T. Laybourne	-	Head Teacher, Town End Farm Primary
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The Chair advised that, as the meeting was inquorate, the following discussions could not be viewed as having been approved and therefore, not lawfully acted upon until approved at a future quorate meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Oliver, Mr T.Khan and Reverend Beck.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 21st February, 2006 (circulated) were deemed to be an accurate record of the meeting, however, they would be submitted to the next meeting for formal approval.

3. NASACRE AGM

The Chair and Ms. Chapman reported on their recent attendance at NASACRE AGM on 4th May, 2006. Members were informed that Graham Langtree had been replaced by Mark Chater as Curriculum Adviser for RE at QCA. An interesting presentation entitled, "Changes to the Curriculum and the place of RE" had been delivered by the Director of the QCA which had concluded with the following message:-

‘Religion’s dark distortion is capable of untold evil and destruction; but its enlightened exploration is capable of constructive good beyond our imagining. We so need young allies in this cause’.

Ms. Chapman advised that the Religious Education Council had received £60,000 funding for 2 years to assist with the development of an action plan to implement the proposed National Strategy. Within this funding, £5,000 was available for SACREs to look at establishing monitoring in schools. Ms. Chapman stressed that this would benefit and help recruit in Sunderland SACRE.

Following discussion, Members noted the report.

4. Monitoring of RE in Sunderland

Ms. Chapman submitted a report which advised the Members of the new thematic inspections which had been introduced by Ofsted, which focused on particular areas rather than subject sections. Consequently, Ofsted could no longer be relied upon to provide information about the quality and provision of RE in schools. It was, therefore, essential that effective monitoring strategies in schools were in place and that other methods currently used by SACRE be strengthened.

The Chair explained that he had discussed this issue with Margaret Ferrie and that it was acknowledged that working with the LA would be the most effective way to evaluate the current situation with regard to provision. Ms. Chapman proposed that the Ofsted Self-evaluation form be adapted for RE and to include a section on Every Child Matters. It was also suggested that a network meeting be held during the Autumn term with primary, secondary and special schools to discuss the proposal in more detail.

Concerns were raised regarding completion of the SEF and whether this would be undertaken by someone with the appropriate skills. Ms. Chapman

advised that guidance would be issued and that she would assist teachers with completion.

In an attempt to raise the profile of the SEF, it was suggested that the proposal be submitted to a meeting of the Director of Children's Services with Head Teachers.

5. SACRE/Self-Evaluation

Ms. Chapman submitted a report which followed on from Ofsted's inspections of some SACREs and their findings. It also fitted with the new Ofsted framework in schools of self-evaluation. SACREs were invited by Ofsted and the QCA to evaluate their effectiveness in five key areas as outlined in the report.

Members discussed the report and suggested that a workshop would be useful to help provide an evaluation. Karen Mould agreed to liaise with Members on their availability on the 3rd October, 2006. The Chair confirmed that SACRE would fund supply cover where necessary.

Action: Karen Mould

6. SACRE Bursary Awards – An Update

Ms. Chapman provided an update on the SACRE bursary awards as follows:-

Grangetown

The award had made a huge impact on the 'Who Am I?' project, for which the RE Co-ordinator was extremely grateful.

Valley Road Early Years Unit

A cultural wall had been created which was diverse and covered all religions.

Usworth Colliery

The bursary had been used to deliver the Northern Saints unit to Y5, with music. Whilst it was an unusual way to deliver a unit, the subject co-ordinator had wanted to do something different and the award had funded a dancer to assist with a production, which was held for parents. It was highly successful and an enjoyable teaching and learning experience for young people, parents and staff. It was anticipated that the video would be shown at the Sandhill Centre.

7. KS3/4 RE Conference

The Chair reported that Ms. Chapman and himself had discussed the possibility of a Conference for Y9 to replace the exhibition which had been

held in previous years. The purpose of the Conference would be to inform Heads of RE to determine the course at KS4 and focus on major issues. It was suggested that it be held at the Stadium of Light and consist of activities to make RE more appealing to young people at options. A certificate of achievement would be presented to all participants.

The Chair reported that Ms. Chapman and himself had attended Durham SACRE to an interfaith dialogue event which was hosted by Rabbi Doved Lewis of Newcastle Orthodox. It focused on how the Jewish Community could be included within the syllabus.

In addition, a book of faith contacts had been established for use by SACRE, details of which were included on North East Religious Learning Resources Centre website. Any Member wishing to be included on the contact list was invited to inform the Chair.

8. Annual Report

The Chair invited Members to a pre-report draft discussion which would be held during the summer break. This would be arranged in due course.

Action: Ms Chapman

9. Any Other Business

The Chair advised Members that Ms. Robson had resigned from SACRE as she was to take up a new post in Peterlee. The Chair thanked Ms. Robson for her contributions and wished her all the very best for the future.

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled to take place at 5.30 p.m., Tuesday, 14th November, 2006.

(Signed) C. SHORT,
Chairman.