

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

7 June 2017

Present:-

Group A: Christian and Other Religion and Belief Communities (with the exception of the Church of England)

K Denby (Humanist representative), H Hastie (Baha'i representative), M Hext (Methodist representative), R Khreishah (Muslim representative), M Miller (Pagan representative), R Nathwani (Hindu representative), B Lane (United reformed Church representative), N Nation (Roman Catholic representative) and J Taylorson (Buddhist representative)

Group B: The Church of England

C Hulbert (Chairman), M Dearden, R Ingraille and T Wilson

Group C: Teachers' Associations

J Goody, P Hammett, W Harrison, P Cornish, S Shute and G Winnall

Group D: The County Council

Councillors E Brennan, C Channon, G Hook and M Squires

Co-opted Members

T Griffiths, J Roberts and S Spence

Advisor

E Pawson

Observer

H Timpson (University of Exeter)

Apologies:-

R Halsey, K Chape, L Clay, E Mihas, K Walshe, J Marshall and Councillor P Colthorpe

1 Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2017 be signed as a correct record.

2 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

Mr Pawson reported on a forthcoming march on Saturday, 10 June at 5.30 pm from Exeter Mosque to Bedford Square to show solidarity and support for the citizens of Manchester and London following the recent attacks.

3 Devon SACRE Membership

Mr Pawson reported the resignation of Tanya Pritchard (Church of England) and Karen Chape (Baptist Representative) and said goodbye to Tanya Pritchard and the Members thanked them for their services to SACRE.

Teresa Griffiths (Co-opted) reported her resignation as a result of a move to another part of Country and Members thanked her for her services and relayed their good wishes for the future.

Mr Pawson also reported the appointment of Ruth Ingrouille as a Church of England representative and welcomed Ruth to her first meeting.

Mr Pawson referred to all members, particularly new members, the National Association of Standing Advisory Council for RE Handbook for SACRE Members, as an informative and useful guide on their role.

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4 SACRE Budget 2017/18 (Minute 33)

Following the resolution at the last meeting Mr Pawson reported on correspondence with the County Council's Head of Education and Learning on the current budget funding (14% reduction) to implement its Development Plan 2017 – 2019. As a result a meeting had been arranged to involve Mr Pawson and Mr Roberts with Babcock with the aim of reducing any further year-on reductions of this dimension and to discuss the structure and current commitments with particular reference to the organisation and budget for the Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) and the significant cost implications of the Review of the Agreed Syllabus over the next 18 months.

SACRE members discussed the need for dedicated County Council support for the HMD organisation and activities, noting the significant contributions in kind from Exeter City Council for this Devon-wide event centred in Exeter. The meeting noted the practical difficulties and limitations in extending activities to more distant parts of the County which the HMD working group had given much consideration over the years.

Councillor Channon indicated her willingness to introduce a Notice of Motion at the next County Council meeting calling for additional financial support from the County Council for HMD organisation and activities currently undertaken by this SACRE through its working party.

RESOLVED that the offer from Councillor Channon to submit a Notice of Motion to the next County Council calling for additional financial support for the HMD organisation and activities be supported.

5 Devon SACRE Annual Report including Analysis of GCSE Results

Mr Pawson reported on the draft Devon SACRE Annual Report 2015/16 (previously circulated) covering standards in Religious Education, the Devon SACRE, training and CPD, and collective worship.

Members noted:

- Devon Schools performance (compared with national results) for the full and short courses from 2012 -2016, and the religious studies examination entry trends 2012 -16 for all Devon Schools (detailed according to maintained and academy Schools)

- the national picture (NATRE research) noting that 79 schools were doing no RE at all but none of these school were in Devon and on which NATRE was meeting Ofsted to address this area of concern
- school monitoring visits by Mr Pawson and Mr Roberts and positive discussions with schools causing concerns in terms of GCSE entries and results
- the shifting pattern between 2014 and 2016 with reduction of cohorts for both the short and full courses and the predicted further reductions with a more content intense GCSE for RE
- the encouraging increase in the GCSE cohort for GCSE RE in Devon compared to national figures but at the same time the disappointing 4 % gap in performance for students gaining A*- C grades
- the increased rigour and increased expectations within KS4 RE teaching
- the difficulty in sustaining effective GCSE teaching with the very limited time allowed for RE
- research evidence showing incidences of references to different subjects in Ofsted reports.

RESOLVED that subject to any drafting errors the Annual report be approved for submission to the DfE.

6 Attitudes towards Relationships and Sex Education

(An item raised at the request of Councillor E Brennan)

Ms Wilson reported on the work of the Church of England Diocese in their development of clear guidance for the teaching of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSCD) across the curriculum for its Schools in Devon which she was happy to share with Members. Members noted that this was largely dependent on the ethos of the school noting the limited time allowed for this, Sex and Relationship training in PGCE courses and the availability of teaching specialists within Schools.

7 Interfaith Focus: Faith and Belief Training , Interfaith Conference, Feedback on Interfaith Week 2016 and Hindu Workshops

Mr Roberts reported on the recent round of training for faith visitor speakers over three Saturdays.

In discussion with the members the following points were raised:

- although numbers of trainees were relatively low the quality of the participants had been excellent and with the support of Mr Pawson the trained speakers from the programme were having a real and positive impact in schools telling their 'own story' and experiences;
- one group of potential visitors that has not been reached through the programme was the Christian Clergy and whilst often used by Schools did not have the benefit of the training available;
- the Church of England Diocese did provide training for its clergy but there was possibly a need for further liaison with Mr Pawson and Mr Roberts in this area;
- following the success of the Inter-faith conference in 2016 and associated Hindu workshops organised by the Devon Faith and Belief Forum, initial planning for 2017 had started and given the recent events in Manchester and London the need for this work was greater than ever;
- the need for further exploration by the DFBF of themes relating to 'end of life' and cross cultural issues;
- availability of registered Faith and Belief training provided by the British Humanist Association (BHA);
- lack of any guaranteed funding for the Forum beyond 2017/18.

8 Learn, Teach, Lead Religious Education (LTLRE): Hub Groups Update

Ms Wilson reported on the latest project LTLRE news:

- the aim of the project was to improve the quality of the teaching of RE across Plymouth, Cornwall, Torbay and Devon via local hubs and the project group meetings held 3 times a year;
- the project was supported by St Luke's Trust and local SACREs including Devon with a £500 grant;
- whilst recent evaluation of LTLRE by the Trust had been positive, there was no guaranteed funding in place beyond 2017/18;
- the difficulties for teachers attending hub meetings and the value of LTLRE as part of their professional development, particularly for less experienced teachers where they are able to develop professional networks;
- breakdown of the LTLRE conference costs.

9 Working Group: Assessment Project

Mr Roberts reported on the Working Group which had met twice since the last meeting. There had been good progress with publication of the 'Guidance for Good Assessment Practice in RE' and the RE Assessment template' circulated to members. These offered clear and concise guidance for Devon schools and the template had been trialled in schools. The working group of teachers had also produced some exemplars to complement the documents to help teachers to use the assessment as effectively as possible. The work continued and real strength came from the commitment of talented and experienced teachers from Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. LTLRE was a critical and essential partner in this work as more exemplars were produced and more teachers were made aware of the resource.

Mr Pawson reported that the material had also been posted to the Babcock website.

10 Planned CPD for Devon Schools

Mr Pawson reported that The LTLRE hubs were offering excellent teacher CPD. Materials were available on-line and this work linked in with the LTLRE project and the hubs.

Members' discussion points included:

- attendance from community and church schools dependent on course content
- where properly targeted attendance was very good
- difficulties for schools in releasing teachers and attendance out of normal working hours
- useful promulgation of information about courses by hub leaders
- the need to encourage Chairs of Governing Bodies to allow for CPD.

11 National Developments

Mr Pawson reported on the Commission on RE with the aim to review the legal, education and policy frameworks for RE. The commission had arranged an evidence gathering session for 20 June at St Luke's campus, Exeter to give people an opportunity to make their views known on RE in schools and colleges.

Mr Pawson indicated that he would be attending and invited Members to suggest to him what he could relay in terms of the purpose and role of SACREs and views on the proposal for a national syllabus.

Members' views included:

- the Humanist view for a national curriculum with local SACRE support, and a more open SACRE with membership reflecting the demographic of the area
- the worry of a national curriculum which could be too narrow

- the view for a locally determined syllabus working within national guidance
- ongoing concerns about the level of local funding of SACREs and consideration of a national funding formula
- the importance of SACREs and RE in promoting community cohesion and a 'wider view' of the world
- the value of SACRE working with other groups such as the DFBF to help empower and support schools.

12 Holocaust Memorial Day 2018 : Planning

Mr Pawson reported on the initial planning and outlined some of the developing events for the day including readings from Ann Frank and an extra event on 1 February at Exeter Cathedral, a Recital and Survivor Talk by Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, a surviving member of the Auschwitz orchestra and a recital by her Son the world-renowned cellist Raphael Wallfisch at an estimated cost of £6000. Members discussed the merits in requesting members (with support from the DCC group) of the County Council to make a contribution through their locality budgets to cover the £6000 cost.

Other discussion included the potential to have events in other parts of the County (other than Exeter) which was limited in terms of the resources available. The central location and good communications to Exeter was noted and that school children from across the county were invited to take part in the Day.

13 Reports on SW SACRE Conference 6 March 2017 at Dillington House, and NASACRE Annual Conference 16 May 2017 in York

Mr Dearden reported on the NASACRE conference and excellent talks from Dr Joyce Miller (Associate Fellow in the Religions and Education Research Unit at the University of Warwick and a commissioner with the RE Council) on a review of RE and by Prof Aaqil Ahmed (Professor at the School of Media and Performing Arts, University of Bolton) on media involvement in RE.

Mr Pawson and Ms Griffiths reported on the South West Conference for SACREs (organised by the South West RE Advisers) which had included a keynote address from Dr Joyce Miller, identifying issues faced by the RE Commission and personal reflections on ways forward.

14 Future SACRE Meetings

Wednesday, 15 November 2017 at County Hall, Exeter and Tuesday, 6 February 2018 at the Mosque Exeter (subject to confirmation) at 10.30 am

The County Council's calendar of meetings can be found at

<http://democracy.devon.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1>

The Meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.35 pm