

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

held on Monday, 9 October, 2017 at 6.00 p.m.

at the Council House, Lichfield Street, Walsall

Present

Mr. C. Hopkins (Chair)
Mr. D. Lomax (Vice Chair)
Councillor Craddock
Councillor Robertson
Councillor D. Barker
Mrs. M. Gibbons
Dr. G. Gomez
Mrs B. Groombridge
Mr. D. Lomax
Father John Nankivell

The Chair asked all persons present to introduce themselves at the meeting.

In Attendance:-

Mrs E. Maher	(Children's Services)
Mr. L. Blaylock	(Consultant, R.E. Today)
Mrs. B. Mycock	(Democratic Services)
Mr. G. Tsiappourdhi	(Observer)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. K. Donnellan, Councillor Rochelle and Councillor Phillips.

2. Late Items to be introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

3. Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)

There were no items for consideration in the private session.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March, 2017 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to an amendment on page 3, Item 10.2b that should have read 'Termly training to be provided by Fiona Moss on behalf of RE Today'.

5. R.E. Today – Lat Blaylock:-

Lat Blaylock attended the meeting and provided an overview of the following items:-

i) Network Group for Primary Teachers

RE Today had successfully arranged termly meetings within Walsall for any teacher who wished to attend and he advised SACRE of the following:-

- there had been 12 attendees at that day's training session (9 October), entitled Practice for Teaching Islam - none of the attendees were from a faith school
- Over 25% (more than 20 out of 80 schools) attended the training. New publicity required to encourage more schools to take up the training, which is free of charge to the schools
- SACRE to decide whether it wishes to continue running the courses

Mrs Maher complimented R.E. Today on the workshops she had recently attended and she advised SACRE and that in response to the need to make schools aware of the free training, she would publicise the training via Walsall Children's Services Update 'Link' page and she would write to the respective Head Teacher Forums. It was suggested that a central listing be maintained to include R.E. co-ordinators from all Walsall schools.

In response to a number of queries, Mr Blaylock confirmed there had been a strong representation from community schools and church schools but there had been problems connecting with secondary academies. Following further discussions it was:-

Resolved

That SACRE's training to be offered to all schools within Walsall.

ii) Plans to Support our Agreed Syllabus

Mr. Lat Blaylock tabled a report at the meeting entitled proposed Walsall SACRE Project for Excellent RE (Primary) to improve RE and create leaders capable of supporting and improving RE within their own school and within other primary schools.

He informed SACRE the project had a cost of £5,000 which would be jointly funded by RE Today Services up to the sum of £2,500 and would be a major initiative for SACRE this year, should members be minded to approve.

Discussions ensued regarding the contribution from RE Today and the process of creating a core group of 10 Walsall schools with enthusiastic RE subject leaders who have the support of senior management for their involvement in the project. Mrs Maher will liaise with RE Today with regards to school contacts.

Members voted and it was:-

Resolved (unanimously)

- i. that SACRE agree to joint fund the 'Project for Excellent RE (Primary)' at a cost of £2,500, which would be jointly funded by RE Today at a cost of £2,500
- ii. that a list of school R.E. Co-ordinators be compiled and maintained

iii) Responding to the National News Agenda in RE Today: the Survey of KS4 by NATRE and the Commission on RE's Interim Report

Mr. Lat Blaylock tabled a document entitled 'Why Do Schools think it is OK to run illegal RE.?', which was based upon his commentary on NATRE's analysis of the Government's Schools Workforce Census that had revealed that more than one in four (28%) of state secondary schools were struggling to meet their legal obligation to teach pupils about major religious and systems of belief. The document also included a copy of the CoRE's (Commission on Religious Education) Interim Report and its list of recommendations.

Members discussed the item further and it was:-

Resolved (unanimously)

That:

- i) The Local Authority members to co-ordinate a Notice of Motion to be presented to full Council on 23rd November on behalf of SACRE, requesting the Council's support of the actions of SACRE in researching the level of RE provision in Walsall, making a reference to Community Cohesion

- ii) The Chair to write to her Majesty's Chief Inspector plus the Secretary of State on behalf of Walsall SACRE to express its concern with regards to the low level of teaching time given to offering RE nationwide within schools and particularly within academies
- iii) The Chair and Mrs Maher to liaise with Chair of WASH (Walsall Academy and Secondary Heads) to request attendance at a future WASH meeting

6. Late Items (or urgency only)

There were no late items for consideration.

7. Dates of meetings for 2017/18

The next meetings of the 2017/18 Municipal Year are as follows:-

- Monday, 5 March, 2018
- Monday, 16 July, 2018

Termination of meeting

The meeting terminated at 7.00 p.m.

Chairman:

Date: