

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

held on Monday, 8 October, 2018 at 6.00 p.m.

at the Council House, Lichfield Street, Walsall

Present

Mr. D. Lomax (Vice Chair – in the Chair)

Dr. G. Gomez

Mrs M. Gibbons

Mrs B. Groombridge

Ms V. Heydon-Matterface

Mr. A. Orlik

Councillor Sohal Singh

Councillor Rasab

In Attendance:-

Mrs. J. Catto (Children's Services)

Ms F. Moss (Consultant, REToday)

Mrs. B. Mycock (Democratic Services / Clerk to SACRE)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received by Councillors Nawaz (Chair), Hussain, Robertson and Rochelle and Ms K. Donnellan

2. Late Items to be introduced by the Chair

There were no late items to be introduced by the Chair.

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 23 July, 2018 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

5. Plans for Supporting RE in Walsall

The report of Ms Moss, REToday Consultant had been submitted

(see annexed)

Ms Moss reported that REToday had provided Walsall's SACRE with specialist support over a number of years and she highlighted the pertinent sections of the report which gave a breakdown of a number of areas of support available and their respective costs to SACRE for 2018/19 as follows:-

i) Primary Network meetings

3 x half day meetings per year – once per term, which are well attended by between 20 and 25 school staff from a mix of community and church schools and Catholic Diocese. The meetings help towards raising standards in RE in schools, with all attendees provided with contact details should RE expert advice be required for difficult situations.

Cost = £1,800 (when purchased as a three day package else costs on a day to day basis = £1,000 per day)

ii) NQT training day

1 day training for newly qualified teachers (NQT) as part of their training programme. Walsall Council has outsourced this service and RE Today will check with respective trainers to enquire and encourage Walsall's RE training. RE Today to ascertain subjects taught and to report to SACRE if RE not being taught.

iii) RE Expert Support for SACRE meetings

RE Today to continue to provide a range of levels of support. Walsall does not currently have a formal agreement and receives support when requested:-

- Attend 3 x SACRE meetings per annum and subsequent work;
- Preparing reports;
- Prepare Walsall's Annual SACRE report as required by DfE;
- Provision of GCSE results and secondary information;
- electronic Ofsted searches to: check RE compliance within schools;
- Preparation of correspondence letters

Cost = £2,500 - Ms Moss reported that Walsall SACRE did not have a formal agreement / contract with RE Today albeit RE Today had always provided support when required.

iv) Primary Pupil Day

One day conference for Year 5 primary pupils on the values of religious education and provide pupils with the resources to run similar conferences back in their own schools. In the past, between 10 and 12 schools had sent pupils to a day conference (approximately 80 students in total), which included Respect / community cohesion and working together. The conferences also provided an

opportunity for teachers to attend and were particularly useful for NQTs to identify more about RE

Cost = £1,800 per pupil conference

v) Secondary Pupil Day

Same as iv) above but for secondary pupils on the science and belief. Consider advising secondary schools with regard to their attendance at a potential Conference day

Cost = £1,800 per pupil conference

vi) Collective Worship Booklet for all Walsall Schools

Project to provide guidance on school worship and assembly for all Walsall schools

Cost = £1,200

vii) Collective Worship Training Day

Training on the above guidance.

Cost = £600

Ms Moss advised members that items vi) and vii) could be combined into one training day

The Chair emphasised the need to secure the immediate support from RE Today with regard to future attendance at meetings and in preparing Walsall SACRE's Annual Report to DfE (statutory requirement) for 2017/18. This was unanimously agreed.

Further discussions ensued with regards to the additional support SACRE wished to purchase from REToday for 2018-19 and 2019-20 whilst taking into consideration the available budget. requested the successful Primary Network meetings be arranged for 2019-20. A query was raised as to whether secondary schools could be invited to attend future 'joint' network meetings as although Catholic and Anglican secondary schools generally did well in RE, other secondary schools did not do so well. In response, Ms Moss confirmed that network meetings to date had been geared towards the 3 to 11 year olds age range only and she felt the addition of secondary school teaching would dilute the discussions. She added that a secondary schools network meeting day could be held next academic year if members so wished.

Resolved

That REToday is commissioned to provide the following work on behalf of Walsall's SACRE for the remainder of 2018-19 and 2019-20:-

- i) support and attendance at SACRE meetings and the respective documentation;
- ii) preparation of Walsall SACRE's Annual Report to DfE (statutory requirement) for 2017/18.
- iii) co-ordinate Primary Network meetings for 2019/20 academic year;
- iv) co-ordinate a Collective Workshop Booklet and a Collective Workshop training day for all Walsall Schools during 2019.

6. National Updates

A document entitled 'National News for SACREs, Autumn 2018' had been submitted

(see annexed).

Ms Moss highlighted the salient points within the document, which included the current national issues relating to the recruitment of RE teachers and that only 50% of vacancies had been filled for 2017/18 academic year. She added that in September 2018, the DfE did take some positive action to encourage more RE teacher training students by doubling their bursary to £9,000, albeit this was still low in comparison with other teacher training subjects. Ms Foss advised that she would forward relevant updates to members via the Clerk.

Resolved

That the document be noted.

7. Commission on RE

A copy of the 'Executive Summary – Religion and Worldview: The Way Forward – a National Plan for RE' was submitted

(see annexed)

Ms Moss highlighted the salient points within the document produced by the Commission on Religious Education (CoRE) and drew members' attention to the list of recommendations produced at the end of the document by an Independent Commission in September 2018, breaking each recommendation down for discussion.

Resolved

That the document be noted

8. Late Items (of urgency only)

The Chair requested the Clerk to forward SACRE's 'Religion and Churches in Walsall, May 2017' document to all Members for comments / amendments.

9. Dates of next meeting for 2018/19

The next scheduled meetings for SACRE are: -

- Monday 25 March, 2019
- Monday, 15 July, 2019

Termination of meeting

The meeting terminated at 7.25 p.m.

Chairman:

Date: