

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

held on Monday, 11 March, 2013 at 6.00 p.m.

at The Council House, Lichfield Street, Walsall

Present

Mr C. Hopkins (Chairman)
Councillor Barker
Councillor Rochelle
Councillor S. Fitzpatrick
Mrs M. Gibbons
Mrs S. Blackmore
Mr D. Lomax
Mr D. Thakker
Mr R. Simmons
Mr R. Askari

In attendance:

Ms R. Rivett – RE Today
Mr Peter Prasadam – Blue Coat Junior School
Mr E Richards – Walsall Children's Services

Late items to be introduced by the Chairman

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

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

There were no items for consideration in the private session.

Minutes

(a) Meeting – 8 October 2012 – for ratification

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2012 were submitted for ratification
(see annexed)

Resolved

That the minutes of the inquorate meeting held on 8 October 2012 be ratified as a correct record.

(b) Strategy Sub-Group – 6 February 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2013 be received.

Update Report of SACRE

The report of SACRE 2011/2012 was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Resolved

That the update report of SACRE be received and noted and referred to Council for information.

Five Year Development Plan

Action Plan update

Mr Richards circulated the SACRE Action Plan for 2013/14 which supported SACRE's Five Year Development Plan

(see annexed)

Mr Richards confirmed that he had worked closely with RE Today in order to take forward the Five Year Development Plan and to achieve this he used a one year operational plan; he was of the view that the operational plan should be reviewed on a regular basis.

Ms Rivett (RE Today) informed SACRE that there would be a review of RE during 2014 and recommended that SACRE should focus on that before considering its Five Year Development Plan.

Mr Richards referred to the services provided by RE Today out of the funding allocated to support SACRE and that these services had been successful overall. The engagement with schools in monitoring collective worship had not been successful as, to enable them to satisfy the regulatory inspection system, schools had concentrated on Maths and English and did not invite representatives from

SACRE. This has also hindered the ability to assess whether the agreed syllabus was being used in schools.

It was suggested that SACRE should consider its work plan for March 2013 to March 2014 and the type of support required from RE Today.

SACRE went through the Action Plan 2013/14 and, in response to questions, Ms Rivett confirmed that the units of work were not a complete syllabus but they enabled teachers to use these to their advantage; there would never be a complete set of units to cover the agreed syllabus. Ms Rivett confirmed that Academies could use the Council's agreed syllabus or they could develop their own. Mr Richards confirmed that consideration would need to be given on ways to re-engage with the secondary sector; resources/training sessions with RE Today could be used to attract secondary interest. Ms Rivett confirmed that schools could be invited and consideration be given for entering the RE Quality Mark; this was a new project recently piloted with some 40/50 schools nationally involved.

With regard to interactive visits, Mrs Blackmore indicated that links with other local SACRE's could be established in order that visits to local places of worship and joint training events with RE Today could be arranged.

Members discussed the possibility of four places of worship being visited by local schools and that guides be present to give visitors appropriate information about the venue.

Consideration was also given to the possibility of monitoring the use of the agreed syllabus, the only information available came from school subject leaders who attended training sessions and it had been highlighted that more units of work were required to develop the areas contained within the syllabus.

Members considered that an RE exhibition be arranged that schools could contribute to and include articles of work, relevant art posters with subject leaders and pupils invited to attend.

With regard to points raised relating to attendance of members at meetings of SACRE, Mrs Ensor informed the meeting that there was a legal requirement to write to all groups requesting details of their representative. Despite responses being received, unfortunately not all members attended the meetings.

Mr Richards undertook to request the primary and secondary fora to include an item on their agenda requesting information from its members on how the agreed syllabus was working within their school and whether they required any support.

After discussion

Resolved

1. That SACRE agree to a one day course for primary teachers and that Walsall Children's Services circulate publicity;
2. That a half day training session be arranged for newly qualified teachers by Children's Services;

3. That the RE exhibition involving pupils and teachers be publicised in local magazines and newspapers and that work on the units of work to support the agreed syllabus continue;
4. That approval be given to Children's Services making the necessary arrangements for schools that were interested to take part in four visits to places of worship and that tour guides be available at the venues to provide relevant information;
5. That approval be given to the development plan being prepared on an annual basis only in view of the proposed national review of RE in 2014..

Establishment of Self Evaluation Sub Group and Self Evaluation

The report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Resolved

1. That the holding of an exhibition be included in the self evaluation action plan;
2. That approval be given to extending the remit of the SACRE strategy sub group to include self evaluation of SACRE.

National Society Statutory Inspections – S.48 – Cooper and Jordan Church of England (VA) Endowed Primary School

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Resolved

That the National Society Statutory Inspections report in respect of Cooper and Jordan Church of England (VA) Endowed Primary School be noted.

Nasacre Annual General Meeting

The Nasacre Annual General Meeting publicity notice was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Resolved

That any member of SACRE wishing to attend the Annual General Meeting should contact the SACRE Clerk who would then make the necessary arrangements.

Late Items

Mrs Gibbons referred to the refusal to admit a pupil to Blue Coat Secondary School in respect of a young person from the migrant population.

The Chairman undertook to raise this matter with the admissions office to ascertain how the fair access protocol was being implemented in Walsall.

The Chairman and members thanked Mr Richards for his work on SACRE and wished him every success for the future.

Termination of Meeting

The meeting terminated at 7.45 p.m.

Chairman

Date