

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

held on Monday, 11 October, 2010 at 5.30 p.m.

at Green Lane Baptist Church, Green Lane, Walsall.

Present

Mr C Hopkins (Chairman)
Councillor K Phillips
Councillor Robertson
Councillor Rochelle
Councillor Turner
Mrs M. Gibbons
Mrs V. Morris
Mr. D. Lomax
Mr. R. Simmons
Mr K. Yates

Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Mrs E Davis, Mr. Dhiren Thakker, Mrs B. Groombridge, Mr.M.Sacha, Mrs.L. Edwards.

Introductions

Members and other persons present introduced themselves at the meeting.

Appointment of Vice-Chairman for the 2010/11 Municipal Year

Resolved

That Councillor I. Robertson be appointed Vice Chairman of SACRE for the 2010/11 Municipal Year.

Resignation

Mr Hopkins informed members that Reverend.E. Snowden had tendered her resignation as she had moved out of the area to take up a new post.

Resolved

The resignation of Reverend E Snowden be noted and that the Chairman write to her thanking her for her contributions to SACRE and to extend SACRE's good wishes on her new appointment.

Late items to be introduced by the Chairman

There were no late Items.

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

There were no items for consideration in the private session.

Minutes – 12 July 2010

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th July were submitted

(see annexed)

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 12th July 2010 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Notes of Strategy Sub Group, 6th September 2010

The notes of the Strategy Sub Group held on the 6th September 2010 were submitted :-

(see annexed).

Resolved

That the notes of the Strategy Sub Group held on the 6th September 2010 be received and noted.

Election of spokespersons for the Groups

A report was submitted

(see annexed)

Resolved

That the following members be appointed as spokespersons for there respective groups for the remainder of the current municipal year :-

Councillor I Robertson – Local Authority Representative

Mrs.V. Morris – Christian and other religious denominations group.

Mr. R.Simmons – Teacher Representative

Mr.C.Hopkins – Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education

Appointment to Vacancies on Strategy Sub Group

Resolved

That the following persons be appointed to fill the vacancies on the Strategy Sub Group :-

Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education – Mr.C.Hopkins
Christian and other religious denominations – Mrs.V.Morris

Update on support for SACRE

Mr.Richards circulated information relating to the current position on support for SACRE and referred to the consultancy arrangements with Mr.L. Blaylock of R.E today. A community cohesion training session for R.E teachers was proposed for 22nd November 2010 which would be offered to schools as a traded service. Colleagues from Sandwell, Dudley and Walsall had also been invited to attend the session on the 22nd November as take up so far had been low. It was suggested that officers write to the chair of governors of schools for this issue to be discussed at governors meetings and the Chair undertook to forward information to the Church of England schools in Walsall. Mr.Yates would to contact the Roman Catholic Secondary schools. Mr Simmons undertook to raise this again at tomorrow's NUT Meeting.

Mr Richards went through the key focus/priorities as well as the consultancy arrangements and the training possibilities with R.E today as well as areas to develop around community cohesion and subject leader training.

A draft service level agreement with R.E today was submitted.

(see annexed)

Members thanked Mr Richards for his efforts in moving SACRE forward and the links that had been created with R.E today.

Resolved

That the reports submitted and the information relating to training for subject leaders and head teachers by R.E today be noted.

Update on School Visits and Dates for future visits

The report on the visit to Phoenix Primary EBD was submitted, together with the information letter to schools regarding visits:-

(see annexed)

Mr.Richards requested that members provide dates for possible visits to schools and indicated that some schools had expressed an interest in receiving visits by members of SACRE. The visits enabled schools to learn about SACRE and enabled SACRE to ascertain how the agreed syllabus was being used.

SACRE discussed the action plan and the intention to reach “advanced” status. Members raised the issue relating to post 16 R.E being delivered by way of a conference and suggested that consideration be given to providing two days of R.E to post 16 pupils in schools in order to fulfil the legal requirements of the curriculum

Mr.Richards explained the basis of the visit to Phoenix and stated that the school expressed an interest in the visit as they were aware of the need to develop cultural and spiritual awareness. It was felt that children were being challenged in their work and there was a positive attitude in the school which displayed specific R.E material. The higher level teaching assistant would be teaching R.E and would look at the impact on pupils.

Mr. Simmons confirmed that the session he attended went well and felt that the visit had been of value to the school.

An evidence base on the way R.E was taught/ delivered in schools could be built up by using Ofsted guidance, the questionnaire circulated to schools and visits to the schools, which would also determine SACRE’s action plan. The school also indicated that they would appreciate support and contact from SACRE on a regular basis. Mr. Simmons indicated that he would be able to take this matter up with other Unions with a view to filling the Teacher Representative vacancies on SACRE.

Mr.Yates informed SACRE that any schools requiring support or assistance could request help from the advanced skills teacher at Blue Coat School and help SACRE to address any needs.

Resolved

- (1) That the key focus and profiles, the letter to schools regarding visits by SACRE members and the report on the outcome of the visit to Phoenix Primary School be received and noted.
- (2) The action plan be reviewed at every meeting.

Provision of Faith Tour Guides

Information on study tours and faith diversity training was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Mr. Gareth Jones of the West Midlands faith forum attended the meeting and circulated information on faith tour guide courses; SACRE could lead on this matter as the introduction of faith tours would support the new agreed syllabus and schools; SARCE and the Multi faith forum should work together to achieve this.

Mr.Jones gave a brief overview of his work with the West Midlands Faith Forum and the Faith Encounter Programme. His work in the West Midlands had lead to the successful introduction and training of approximately 40 faith tour guides in a variety of faiths in Birmingham. The course had been a hugely positive experience for those taking part and they had learned a great deal about their own as well as other faiths and had developed techniques of guiding. The Faiths in Actions grant had enabled the Faith Encounter Programme to take the course further around the West Midlands and it was hoped that

Walsall would be one of the centres for the course which was Level 2 accredited by the Institute of Tour and Guiding.

The Faiths in Action budget could provide £1195.00 with other costs being borne by SACRE and depending on how many faiths would take part and total £1500.00.

If SACRE and the Multifaith Forum were involved, the Faith Encounter Programme would offer their expertise as well as funding of approximately £1000.00. At the end of the process, schools would be able to visit places of worship and the quality of the visits would be increased.

Mr.Yeates indicated that funding from the extended schools budget could be provided to fund registration fees, public liability insurance and Blue Coat School would provide the venue. This would reduce the cost by approximately £800.00.

Resolved

That the information above be noted and that the following members be appointed to the SACRE/Multifaith Forum Working Group:-

- Mrs V Morris
- Councillor I Robertson
- Mr.R Simmons
- Mr.C Hopkins

Termination of Meeting

The meeting was terminated at 7.18 p.m

Chairman

Date