

# Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Monday 28 November 2011

## PRESENT:

Mrs Mitchell, in the Chair.

Cathy Bowness, Alison Bradley, Brendan Brookshaw, Rev Chave, Councillor Ian Gordon, Teresa Griffiths, Clare Hamon, Liz Hill, Gwen Hughes, Fiona Hutchings, Anna Kelly, Ben Kerr, Helena Mitchell, Pam Shelmerdine, Councillor Chaz Singh and Councillor David Stark.

Apologies for absence: Zainab Abubakar, Councillor Drean, Martin Edmonds, Peter Grainger, Tim Lyddon, Richard Maudsley, Caroline McVicker, Dr Jatindra Saha and Dr Barbara Wintersgill.

Also in attendance: Jonathan Marshall (RE Adviser) and Ross Johnston (Democratic Support Officer).

The meeting started at 1.30 pm and finished at 3.40 pm.

*Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.*

## 14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest was made by a member in accordance with the Code of Conduct –

<b>Name</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Interest</b>
Councillor Aspinall	Minute 21. Plymouth Centre for Faith's and Cultural Diversity	School Governor at Salisbury Road Primary School	Personal

## 15. MINUTES

It was commented by a SACRE member that the minutes made no reference to a discussion at the last meeting for SACRE member nameplates to include first names.

Agreed that

- (1) all SACRE members nameplates are re-printed to include all members' first names, surnames and groups that they represent;
- (2) the minutes of the 4 July 2011 are approved as a correct record.

## 16. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.



17. **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

The Chair welcomed the following member to SACRE –

- Brendan Brookshaw, representing Plymouth Association of Governors.

18. **SUMMER 2011 EXAMINATION RESULTS**

The Religious Education Adviser provided an update on the summer 2011 Examination Results and informed members that –

- (a) the exam results would be included in the draft SACRE Annual Report 2011;
- (b) it was not yet known where the annual report would be submitted due to the recent demise of the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency;
- (c) figures on exam results and candidates, had presented a very positive outlook for the future of Religious Education and some of the most promising findings included –
  - a huge increase in the number of candidates taking the GCSE full course from 600 in 2010 to 766 in 2011 and the A Level from 110 in 2010 to 120 in 2011;
  - an increase in students receiving an A\* - C in GCSE full course from 66 per cent in 2010 to 68.3 per cent in 2011;
- (d) all schools in Plymouth, except one, had offered either the short or GCSE full course in 2011.

It was commented by members that –

- (e) the main concern for RE still remained as it was not included as part of the English Baccalaureate and in the future some schools may try to encourage students to take history and geography instead.
- (f) the figures presented were slightly misleading as four of the 16 Plymouth schools accounted for over 50 per cent of the candidates taking the GCSE full course.

19. **NATIONAL AND LOCAL RE UPDATES**

The RE Adviser provided SACRE Members with an update on national and local updates. Members were informed that –

- (a) it had now been accepted that Religious Education would not be a subject included in the English Baccalaureate;



- (b) John Keast, had recently taken over the Chair of the Religious Education Council (REC) and one of his first roles would be to implement the RECs five year strategy plan in order to raise issues in the development of RE teaching;
- (c) a new OFSTED Inspection Framework would begin in January 2012. There was a greater weight given to looking at pupils' awareness and development of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions, (SMSC). The major focus of inspections will be:
  - achievement of pupils;
  - quality of teaching;
  - behaviour and safety of pupils;
  - quality of leadership and management;
- (d) the OFSTED Inspection Framework's focus on spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions was positive news for RE as RE would have a significant impact in the development of these dimensions in young people;
- (e) in early 2012 Ministers were to announce which subjects would be included in a new national curriculum.

In terms of RE locally members were advised that –

- (f) the Devon, Plymouth and Torbay syllabus was in its fifth and final year and would be reviewed. Major changes were not envisaged;
- (g) the syllabus was recognised nationally as being one of excellence and as such would not be considerably changed but would be slightly amended, in particular, to focus more extensively on spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions;
- (h) Interfaith Week was held during 21 – 25 November and provided opportunities for schools to encourage young people to think about the importance of RE and faith and interfaith relationships;
- (i) NASACRE membership for 2012 had been applied for.

## 20. **HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2012**

The Religious Education Adviser informed SACRE members that –

- (a) Holocaust Memorial Day was to be held on 27 January 2012 at the Memorial Tree in the English Garden, Mount Edgcumbe at 12:30pm; this would be the 10<sup>th</sup> year that the event had been held at the Memorial Tree;



- (b) the Plymouth College of Art was hosting an exhibition called 'the others'. Plymouth schools were to be invited to submit artwork to be displayed at the event on the 27 January 2012. There would also be an 'Evening of Reflection'.

SACRE members were invited to watch a DVD about Holocaust Memorial Day and undertake a discussion. The following comments were raised –

- (c) Holocaust Memorial Day had wide educational aims and was about focusing on other genocides and present day issues of persecution. Learning the lessons of the past to build a better future is central;
- (d) SACRE should focus on educating schools and teachers on aspects from Holocaust Memorial Day that could be used in schools to deliver further learning on spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions;
- (e) future Holocaust Memorial Day events should be held in more public venues and advertised more widely to encourage a wider public recognition of the issues raised.

## 21. **PLYMOUTH CENTRE FOR FAITHS AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

The RE Adviser gave an update on the Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity and informed members that –

- (a) the centre celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in September and as part of the celebration a booklet had been published;
- (b) following OFSTED reviewing schools promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness when judging a schools overall effectiveness the RE Adviser was now offering specialist advice to schools on how they could promote dimensions of spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions;
- (c) in the past year the centre's Faith Speakers had delivered over 360 visits to schools and the centre had also organised 40 school trips to faith buildings and places of worship across the City;
- (d) the centre currently leased a building from Salisbury Road Primary School who had indicated that they would require the building for their own use in the future, which would mean that the centre was required to find a new premise possibly as soon as September 2012.

*(Councillor Mrs Aspinall declared a personal interest in the above item.)*



## 22. **SACRE WORKING GROUP UPDATES**

SACRE was informed that the six key priorities in the SACRE Development Plan 2011 – 2014 had been championed by nominated group representatives who had formed working groups with fellow SACRE members.

Helena Mitchell, Chair, who was champion for Group one on the key priority - to seek on-going opportunities to raise the profile of SACRE, informed SACRE that –

- (a) in order to achieve the key priority the group set objectives which included the following areas of focus –
  - improving what SACRE offered;
  - improving the delivery of RE in schools;
  - developing RE resource boxes to be used in schools;
  - assisting with the delivery of the agreed RE syllabus in schools;
  - increased number of SACRE members to visit schools;
- (b) following the group's meeting and its focus on the above areas a protocol document was produced for all SACRE members entitled 'guidelines for visiting schools.

Mrs Liz Hill, who was champion for group five on the key priority - to revise guidance and identify key resources for collective worship, informed SACRE that –

- (c) the outcomes for group five were focused on producing free guidance and resources that could be provided at workshops;
- (d) in order to take this priority forward a letter would be sent to all head teachers asking if they would take part in the working group;
- (e) the next working group meeting would take place on Thursday 19 January 2012 and if members were interested in attending they should contact Mrs Liz Hill.

Jonathan Marshall, RE Adviser informed all members that the four other groups were planning to meet before the next meeting and an update would be provided on these groups at that meeting.

Agreed that –

- (1) all groups feedback their ideas to Jonathan Marshall, RE Adviser, to ensure that any common themes are established and duplication is prevented;
- (2) the letter sent to all school head teachers in Plymouth be forwarded to



all SACRE members via email.

23. **UNMET NEEDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The RE Adviser informed members that he is part of a working group that had bid for £90k to the St. Lukes Trust, Exeter; with the aim to provide support, resources and training for RE teachers through local hubs.

Agreed that an update on the bid would be provided at a future meeting.

24. **OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair advised SACRE that she had recently received two pieces of very sad news and informed members that –

- (a) Valerie Armitage (CofE) had tragically died, very suddenly, and that this was a very sad loss to all;
- (b) Jenny Evans', (youth parliament representative on SACRE), father had also recently passed away, after a long illness.

All members wished to pass on their condolences to the families involved and expressed a great desire to see Jenny Evans soon, at a future SACRE meeting.

25. **DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

Agreed that the next meeting of SACRE would be held at 11:15am on Monday 5 March 2012, and subject to agreement, at the Plymouth Islamic Education Trust centre (PIETY), 19 Greenbank Avenue, Plymouth, PL4 8PS.

26. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.