

# Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Monday 2 July 2012

## PRESENT:

Miss Mitchell, in the Chair.

Councillor Mrs Aspinall, Cathy Bowness, Mrs Bradley, Councillor Drean, Councillor Gordon, Mrs Hamon, Mrs Hill, Mrs Hutchings, Anna Kelly, Mr Kerr, Dr Saha, Mrs P Shelmerdine, Councillor Singh, Mrs Slow, Councillor Stark.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Ricketts, Father G Carpenter, Rev P Chave, Ms T Griffiths, Miss C McVicker and Dr Barbara Wintersgill.

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

The meeting started at 1.30 pm and finished at 4.10 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.*

## 39. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

It was agreed that Group A would continue to have the chair, in partnership with Group C until Summer 2013. Mrs Helena Mitchell would continue in the Chair and subject to the agreement of Mrs Theresa Griffiths, she would continue as Vice-Chair.

## 40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declaration of interest was made by Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct –

| <b>Name</b>         | <b>Subject</b>    | <b>Reason</b>              | <b>Interest</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Councillor Aspinall | All agenda items. | Chair of Friends of PIETY. | Personal        |

## 41. MINUTES

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2012 are approved as a correct record.

## 42. TRACKING RESOLUTIONS

Members noted the tracking resolution document and commented that the document was an effective tool and a very useful addition to the agenda.

43. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

44. **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

The Chair welcomed Cathy Slow, representing the Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter, to her first SACRE meeting.

45. **NATIONAL AND LOCAL UPDATES**

The RE Adviser informed members that nationally –

- (a) following concerns raised about the loss of numbers taking up RE GCSE the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) had launched a survey reviewing the teaching of RE a year after it was omitted from the English Baccalaureate;
- (b) the future status and place of RE was still uncertain and the upcoming decision on the National Curriculum would have an impact on the subject nationally;
- (c) the Religious Education Council (REC) would be producing a report for the School's Minister, Nick Gibb, highlighting what good quality RE looks like;
- (d) the Religious Education All Party Parliamentary Group was launched by Stephen Lloyd MP in early June 2012 to raise awareness of the value of RE; currently 37 MPs had signed up to this group.

On a local level members were informed that that the local syllabus was due to be reviewed as it had been five years since the last review.

Agreed that –

- (1) a copy of the NATRE survey be emailed to all members;
- (2) Helena Mitchell, Chair would write a letter to all local MPs highlighting the importance of the Religious Education All Party Parliamentary Group asking them to sign up to this group;
- (3) the local syllabus will be reviewed in 12 months at a time following the decision on the National Curriculum.

(i) **NASACRE AGM**

The RE Advisor informed members that –

- (a) he had attended the NASACRE AGM on behalf of Plymouth SACRE;

- (b) Professor Robert Jackson gave a very inspiring speech at the AGM, which provided an insight into world-wide RE research showing that England had a very good RE process;
  - (c) nationally, there were fewer than 50 RE Advisors remaining, which reflected the struggle of RE in general and the budget constraints in local authorities.
- (ii) **UNMET NEEDS PROJECT**  
The RE Adviser informed members that –
- (a) the unmet RE needs project had secured £117k over three years across Cornwall, Devon and Plymouth;
  - (b) the project had appointed Linda Rudge, as a Project Director, who embraced her new role by organising a conference aimed at teachers which was scheduled for October 2012.
- (iii) **MINSTER PROJECT**  
The RE Adviser informed members that money identified in the SACRE budget had been ring-fenced for a project to develop the Minster Church of St Andrew to improve resources and help offer and enhance visits to the Minster.
- (iv) **PLYMOUTH CENTRE FOR FAITHS AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY**  
The RE Adviser informed members that –
- (a) the Centre had spent 11 years in its current location at Watts Road this had come to an end, as Salisbury Road school is expanding and requires the building back. The Centre is now in the process of moving into temporary accommodation situated in the playground of Salisbury Road Primary School before eventually, being permanently situated within a new building of the school;
  - (b) across the city 56 schools had now signed up to the Centre's services: paid subscriptions;
  - (c) in the past year over 300 hours were spent in schools by faith speakers

#### 46. **OFSTED REPORTS**

The RE Adviser informed members that –

- (a) the new Ofsted framework aimed to incorporate a stronger focus on spiritual, moral, social and cultural processes in schools and it was hoped that reporting on Ofsted Inspections in schools to SACRE would raise members awareness of the state of RE in local Plymouth schools;
- (b) unfortunately, despite the new framework Ofsted Inspectors were still not comprehensively reporting on Religious Education or collective worship, however, all 30 Ofsted inspections in Plymouth had reported

that overall effectiveness of S,M,S,C development were, satisfactory, good or outstanding;

- (c) it is understood that Ofsted inspectors were due to undergo further training over the Summer and inspections were to be carried out slightly differently from September 2012 with greater attention to SMSC;
- (d) the advice from Ofsted regarding the guidance on teaching RE and collective worship is that it is for the schools to determine their own way of teaching, in line with locally Agreed Syllabuses, rather than dictating a generic approach for RE in schools.

It was agreed that –

- (1) the RE Adviser would review the 30 Ofsted reports on Plymouth schools and identify which schools that had been inspected had signed up to the Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity;
- (2) the RE Adviser would continue to review Ofsted inspection reports and report back to SACRE on their findings.

#### 47. **THE CONTEXT AND QUESTIONS FOR RE, SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

SACRE members were provided with a document produced by the Association of Religious Education Inspectors, Advisors and Consultants (AREIAC) called 'Collective Worship Revisited'. The RE Adviser informed members that –

- (a) the two key aims of the National Curriculum were that schools should:
  - provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve; and,
  - promote learning of S,M,S,C and educate pupils into aspects of adult life;
- (b) RE helps explore the aims of the national curriculum and also gets pupils to think about what matters to them;
- (c) the 'Collective Worship Revisited' document was an attempt to demonstrate the value of collective worship and address the issues and concerns. It was a positive step forward in assisting schools to structure quality approaches to collective worship.

#### 48. **SACRE WORKING GROUPS UPDATE**

SACRE Members were provided with an update from working groups that had met since the last meeting.

Liz Hill, champion for group five on the key priority – to revise guidance and identify key resources for collective worship, gave a presentation and informed SACRE that –

- (a) the aim of the group was to create a rolling programme for both primary and secondary schools which, was based on a collective worship theme for each week with separate subthemes for each day;
- (b) the programme designed covered the academic year 2012 – 2013 and aimed to highlight collective worship and RE topics and promote community cohesion;
- (c) the programme had given titles to each weekly and daily theme and the next step for the working group was to establish a comprehensive resource structure for schools to utilise;
- (d) ideally the resources would be hyperlinked to each topic in an electronic version of the programme that would be shared with all schools and potentially could be a resource for trainee teachers.

Pam Shelmerdine informed SACRE members that she had recently visited Leigham Primary School to observe the teaching of RE and stated that it was a brilliant experience and very encouraging to witness such good quality teaching.

Mrs Helena Mitchell, who was champion for group one - to seek on-going opportunities to raise the profile of SACRE, informed members that –

- (e) the working group had now created a portable display that could be used at conferences and events to promote and advertise the work of SACRE;
- (f) a resource box for schools was being explored, which was hoped to enable schools to improve the resources available for RE teaching.

Jonathan Marshall, RE Adviser informed SACRE that –

- (g) he was aiming to create a SACRE/RE website which could also be used as the central store for the schools collective worship programme;
- (h) on behalf of SACRE an event had been organised on 3 October 2012 which would be hosted at the Central Methodist Hall and would have John Keast, Chair of the RE Council, as a key note speaker, he will speak to the title; “the place of RE in schools and the community”. The meeting will be open to teachers and SACRE members in neighbouring authorities;
- (g) SACRE would be sponsoring a school event for Holocaust Memorial Day 2013, which would see school pupils use performing arts to work to the theme for 2013 ‘communities together: build a bridge’.

Agreed that –

- (1) Liz Hill would email a copy of the draft rolling programme to all SACRE members;

- (2) if any SACRE member wished to further visit a school they should contact Helena Mitchell;
- (3) If any SACRE member would like to assist with the event on 3 October 2012 or the HMD one in January 2013, they should contact Jonathan Marshall.

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

Agreed that the next meeting of SACRE would be held at 1:30pm on Monday 10 December 2012, and subject to agreement, at the Mutley Baptist Church, Mutley Plain, Plymouth, PL4 6LB.

50. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.