

# **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

**Monday 10 March 2014**

## **PRESENT:**

Councillor Aspinall, in the Chair.

Councillors Dr Mahony and Singh.

Dr Judith Beckman (substitute for Anna Kelly), Catherine Bowness, Alison Bradley, Penny Burnside, Katie Freeman, Liz Hill, Pam Shelmerdine, Dr Jatindra Saha, Alison Sturgeon.

Co-opted Representatives: Father G Carpenter, Reverend Gordon Cryer and Dr Clare Hamon.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Drean, Gordon and Stark.

Martin Edmonds, Heather Farrow, Barry Good, Pete Grainger, Jamie Heselden, Gwen Hughes, Caroline McVicker, Helena Mitchell, Barbara Wintersgill.

Also in attendance: Jonathan Marshall (RE Advisor), Fiona Evans (Vital Sparks Project Producer) and Lynn Young (Democratic Support Officer).

The meeting started at 9.40 am and finished at 12.30 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.*

## 25. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest in accordance with the code of conduct.

## 26. **MINUTES**

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2013 are confirmed as a correct record.

## 27. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

## 28. **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

The chair welcomed the Reverend Gordon Cryer to his inaugural SACRE meeting.

## 29. **HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY**

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, provided an update on events that were held for Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January 2014.

Members were advised that –

- (a) Holocaust Memorial Day was becoming a prominent part of the Civic diary and Plymouth life;
- (b) a range of events took place across the city to mark Holocaust Memorial Day, and included –
  - the annual civic ceremony of remembrance at the memorial tree in the English Garden at Mount Edgumbe Country Park;
  - a public exhibition and schools event at Plymouth University;
  - a four day visit from Solly Irving, a Holocaust survivor, who spoke at ten secondary schools and public meetings;
- (c) a motion relating to Holocaust Memorial Day had been proposed and carried at the City Council meeting on 27 January 2014;

Following a discussion, members raised the following points –

- (d) schools had the opportunity to discuss Holocaust Memorial Day with their pupils and could decide in which lesson and at which age to raise the issue;
- (e) Holocaust Memorial Day was an excellent event which engaged children of all ages;
- (f) Holocaust Memorial Day would receive better coverage if events took place in the public domain, eg the city centre;
- (g) SACRE members had the opportunity to influence the RE syllabus to ensure that Holocaust Memorial Day was represented in it. It is also in the History syllabus for year nine.

### 30. **TOWARDS A NEW RE AGREED SYLLABUS**

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, advised members that -

- (a) the RE syllabus was revised every five or six years;
- (b) the RE syllabus would be revised in collaboration with representatives from Devon and Torbay;
- (c) there was also the opportunity to create a Plymouth dimension to the RE syllabus focusing on local heritage, diversity and spirituality;

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, showed a Powerpoint presentation from Alan Brine, HMI for RE. This was based on the recent long report for RE, (Realising the Potential) conducted every three years. Members were advised that –

- (d) 180 schools had been observed over a three year period;
- (e) six out of ten schools were considered to be inadequate at RE;

- (f) low levels of religious literacy was evident in schools;
- (g) new hubs had been created in Plymouth, led by PLREs (Project Leaders of RE) to support RE teachers;
- (h) young people needed to develop their skills to enable them to analyse and discuss religion;

Following a discussion, members raised the following points –

- (i) it was important that schools would want to buy in to the new RE syllabus;
- (j) a number of children had very little knowledge of RE due to a lack of religious influence in their home life;
- (k) some teachers had very little formal training in RE, and it was important that this was rectified;
- (l) students were unwilling to study RE to GCSE level as they did not value it as a worthwhile subject;
- (m) RE was unique to other subjects as it could develop a child's character and make them a better person;
- (n) it was important to promote RE in schools as the subject was being downgraded;
- (o) parents and headteachers did not value the subject;
- (p) some pupils did enjoy RE lessons but were too embarrassed to tell others;
- (q) teachers of RE in secondary schools were in a position to assist teachers in primary schools;
- (r) teachers of RE needed to be committed to the subject.

### 31. **THE RE ADVISER'S ROLE AND SUPPORT FOR SACRE**

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, provided an update on his role.

Members were informed that –

- (a) Jonathan Marshall had taken the decision to retire in July 2014;
- (b) in July 2014, the post of RE Advisor would be deleted;
- (c) Jonathan Marshall hoped to work freelance after his retirement, and there was the possibility that he would be able to support SACRE;
- (d) it was vital that the work of SACRE continued, as SACRE had increased in

importance and was more influential;

- (e) Jonathan Marshall would continue to work with SACRE on the new syllabus until he retired;
- (f) support for schools, SACRE and the Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity needed to continue and a number of discussions were being planned.

*Councillor Dr Mahony left part way through this agenda item.*

32. **SACRE BUDGET**

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, circulated copies of the SACRE budget 2013/14, and asked that any outstanding invoices were submitted to him for payment. He advised members that any money that remained in the budget at the end of this financial year would be carried forward to the next financial year.

33. **RE QUALITY MARK**

Katie Freeman provided an update on the RE Quality Mark.

Members were informed that –

- (a) funding for the scheme was available from two charities;
- (b) Katie Freeman had submitted a bid for funding for four schools. Upon receipt of the award, those schools could then assist other schools with their application;
- (c) the cost of the RE Mark was £475 per school and involved the completion of a substantial amount of paperwork;
- (d) Hyde Park Infants School was looking at achieving the gold grade;
- (e) at least 10 other primary schools were interested in joining the scheme;
- (f) Katie Freeman was a Senior Lead Educator (SLE), and had a lot of credence with other teachers in the city;
- (g) Katie Freeman was to host a meeting for primary school RE teachers at Hyde Park Infants School on Monday 17 March, where she would formulate a plan for Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

34. **LEARNTEACHLEAD RE PROJECT**

Katie Freeman provided an update on the LearnTeachLead RE project.

Members were advised that –

- (a) the LearnTeachLead RE Project was launched in October 2012 for a three year period;
- (b) the LearnTeachLead RE Project was supported by the St Luke's College Foundation (often referred to as St Luke's Trust);
- (c) the LearnTeachLead RE Project was a nationally recognised network for teachers;
- (d) it was hoped that funding for the LearnTeachLead RE project would extend past 2015;
- (E) Katie Freeman was a hub leader for this project, along with Ian Hartley of Ridgeway School.

35. **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP RESOURCES**

Liz Hill provided an update on the Collective Worship Resources pack.

Members were informed that –

- (a) the Collective Worship Resources pack had received very positive feedback;
- (b) packs would be sent to those schools who had not yet received a copy;
- (c) spare packs were available for SACRE members to view;
- (d) the pack was constantly updated.

36. **DVD - 'IN HEART AND ACTION'**

SACRE members viewed the recently produced DVD 'In Heart and Action'.

Members were advised that –

- (a) the DVD was produced by Jonathan Marshall and Fiona Evans, Vital Sparks Project Producer;
- (b) the DVD had been funded by SACRE through Plymouth City Council;
- (c) every school in Plymouth had been sent a copy of the DVD.

Following a request from Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, Fiona Evans provided details on the Vital sparks project.

Members were advised that –

- (d) the Vital Sparks project, part of Plymouth Culture Board, was a city-wide initiative designed to inspire arts, culture and creativity in Plymouth;

- (e) the project was a two and a half year initiative funded by Arts Council, England;
- (f) small grants of between £500 and £5000 were available to community, youth and resident groups. The sum of £15,000 was available every six months to fund these grants;
- (g) interested groups did not need a constitution or a bank account to enable them to apply for funding;
- (h) funding was only available to Plymouth residents;
- (i) schools were not eligible to apply for funding, but parents were;
- (j) the application form was available on-line, and paper copies were available at Plymouth Museum.

For more information, SACRE members can contact Fiona on [fiona.evans@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.evans@plymouth.gov.uk) or view the webpage [Plymouth City Council - Vital Sparks](#).

### 37. **NASACRE BRIEFING/AGM**

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, updated members on the previously circulated NASACRE briefing paper.

Members were advised that –

- (a) Barbara Wintersgill had worked with NASACRE to produce a guide for governing bodies;
- (b) spare copies of the 'Guidance to NASACRE' booklets were available to members;
- (c) a volunteer to attend the NASACRE AGM in London on 22 May was required.

Agreed that –

- (1) Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, would send information on the guides available for governing bodies to Nick Rich, Governor Development Team, in order for it to be distributed;
- (2) any SACRE member who was available to attend the NASACRE AGM was to inform Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, at the earliest opportunity.

### 38. **SOUTH WEST SACRE CONFERENCE**

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, asked for a volunteer to attend the South West SACRE Conference in Dillington on 20 March. Members were also advised that the March edition

of the Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity eNewsletter was now available on their website.

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

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, advised members that the provisional date of the next meeting was Monday 7 July 2014, at a venue yet to be confirmed.

40. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.