

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Monday 14 November 2016

PRESENT:

Martin Edmonds, in the Chair.

Helena Mitchell, Vice Chair.

Councillors Mrs Aspinall, Drean and Morris.

Penny Burnside, Katie Freeman, Gary Futchter, Liz Hill, Anna Kelly, Astra Parkin and Alison Williams.

Co-opted Representatives: Mark Mesley and Margaret Thompson.

Apologies for absence: Councillor Ball.

Catherine Bowness, MarkAndrew Dearden, Gwen Hughes and Dr Barbara Wintersgill.

Also in attendance: Jonathan Marshall (RE Adviser), Heather Ogburn (Senior Leadership Adviser) and Lynn Young (Democratic Support Officer).

The meeting started at 1.30 pm and finished at 3.32 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.

11. **Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair**

Jonathan Marshall (RE Adviser) reminded members of the previous resolution in which the role of Chair and Vice Chair would be operated on a two year rotation basis between Groups A and C and Groups B and D.

Agreed that Groups A and C would take on the roles of Chair and Vice Chair for the next two year period.

Following a discussion, it was agreed that –

- (1) the Chair for the forthcoming municipal year would be Mr Martin Edmonds (Group C);
- (2) the Vice Chair for the forthcoming municipal year would be Mrs Helena Mitchell (Group A).

12. **Declarations of Interest**

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

13. **Minutes**

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2016 are confirmed as a correct record.

14. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

15. **Membership update**

Jonathan Marshall (RE Adviser), provided an update on the current membership.

Two new members were welcomed to their inaugural meeting -

- (a) Astra Parkin (Baptist Church representative);
- (b) Gary Fatcher, head of All Saints Academy Plymouth, (PASH representative).

Members were advised that –

- (c) Mirella Paganuzzi is the new Special Schools representative;
- (d) a new Roman Catholic representative was still being sought. A possible candidate, Dr David Lundie (Associate Professor in Education at Marjon) had yet to be approached.

Jonathan Marshall agreed to contact Dr Lundie regarding membership of SACRE.

The Chair thanked Jonathan Marshall for his report.

16. **Annual report and Religious Studies examination results**

Jonathan Marshall (RE Adviser) provided members with details of the SACRE Annual Report and the 2016 Religious Education examination results.

Members were advised that –

- (a) the SACRE Annual Report would be available at the end of January 2017, and would be circulated to members and sent to NASACRE;
- (b) Katie Freeman continued to successfully lead the RE Hub;
- (c) three teacher training days had been held at PIETY in February;
- (d) all Plymouth schools had received a number of publications to assist with the teaching of Islam and British Values in Religious Education;
- (e) Solly Irving (a Holocaust survivor) had visited Plymouth in January 2016 for Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD);

- (f) Jonathan Marshall and MarkAndrew Dearden had attended the South West SACRE Conference and had met the new CEO of the RE Council;
- (g) two local schools had received grants from SACRE to assist with the development of the new RE syllabus in their schools;
- (h) 13 of the 17 secondary schools in Plymouth had entered a total of 659 pupils for GCSE RE;
- (i) Coombe Dean School, Eggbuckland Community College, Sir John Hunt Community Sports College and UTC Plymouth did not enter any pupils for GCSE RE, and members were advised that there could be a number of reasons for this;
- (j) 74% of pupils attained A*-C (slightly above the national average of 72%);
- (k) the two Roman Catholic schools enter all of their pupils for GCSE RS;
- (l) 10 schools had entered a total of 93 pupils for A Level RE – with 100% attaining A*-E;
- (m) 10 schools had entered a total of 68 pupils for AS Level RE – with 90% attaining A*-C.

Gary Fatcher advised members that all of the current Year 11 Pupils at All Saints had been entered for GCSE RE, and acknowledged that not all of them would achieve a good result. The Year 9 pupils in academic year 2017/18 would have more curriculum time for RE which would impact on other subject areas.

Jonathan Marshall reminded members of the importance of studying Religious Education, as it also contributed to the 'building resilience' aspect of the Prevent agenda. The Chair thanked Jonathan Marshall for his report.

17. **Senior Education Adviser**

Heather Ogburn (Senior Leadership Adviser) provided members with an overview of her work, in particular the work surrounding the Prevent agenda.

Members were advised that –

- (a) over 50 Plymouth schools had received Prevent training as part of their Safeguarding training. Training was a big pressure for a number of schools due to the large number of staff that needed to be trained. For this reason the possibility of Prevent twilight training had been investigated;
- (b) it was necessary for schools to afford Prevent training the same importance as Safeguarding training;

- (c) it was important that young people-
- were empowered to have a voice;
 - understood the consequences of their actions;
 - can participate in the curriculum;
 - can challenge prejudices;
 - develop their thinking skills;
 - think for themselves;
 - understand that not everything they hear or see is correct;
- (d) some of the Prevent training had involved members of PIETY (at their request);
- (e) primary school children used a workbook to work through the Prevent agenda (Detective Dave is the character). This training had proved to be very popular and changed frequently;
- (f) children who were thought to be at risk of extremism could be referred to the 'Channel Panel' (*Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. The programme uses a multi-agency approach to protect vulnerable people by:*
- *identifying individuals at risk*
 - *assessing the nature and extent of that risk*
 - *developing the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned*)
- Any child who refused to participate in this programme and was thought to be at risk was notified to the police. The programme focused on three categories – the far right, ISIS related issues and anything else (homophobia, animal rights, feminist rights);
- The number of referrals from schools had increased as more people became aware of the Prevent agenda; however it was not possible to advise members of the number of Plymouth children referred;
- (g) Plymouth City Council were hosting a Prevent Conference on Tuesday 15 November – school staff and other agencies were welcome to attend.

The Chair thanked Heather Ogburn for her report.

18. **Understanding Christianity - a resource for schools**

Katie Freeman discussed the 'Understanding Christianity' paper that had been circulated with the agenda, and advised members that the training package was comprehensive and interactive, and teachers needed to extract the relevant information that they required for their individual lessons.

It is hoped that similar resources for other religions would be produced and it was thought that a resource on Islam would become available in the near future.

The Chair thanked Katie Freeman for her report.

19. **National and local news and developments**

Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC)

Jonathan Marshall (RE Adviser) advised members that a high-profile independent Commission had been established by the Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC) to make wide-ranging recommendations to overhaul Religious Education in schools.

The Commissioners, all experts in their different fields, bring together a wealth of experience from teaching, school leadership, academia, journalism and law.

The process of gathering evidence would start in autumn 2016 and last for two years, with a final report expected in mid-2018.

LeadTeachLearnRE (LTLRE) and RE Hub

Katie Freeman advised that she has recently attended the fifth Annual LTLRE Conference at St Mellion in October.

Members were advised that –

- (a) the conference had been well attended by primary, secondary and student teachers;
- (b) the keynote addresses were provided by Helen Matter (Schools' Adviser, Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich) and Grace Davie (Professor emeritus of Sociology at the University of Exeter, and Chair of the St Luke's College Foundation);
- (c) workshops took place on subject leadership, new projects, developments in 'assessment without levels' and teachers' subject knowledge;
- (d) two new areas were now being funded, and Katie had been involved in training their RE Hub leaders;
- (e) funding was available for another LTLRE Annual Conference, however the situation surrounding the future funding of LTLRE was still unknown;
- (f) the next RE Hub meeting would be held at 4 pm on Thursday 1 December at St Matthew's Primary and Nursery Academy, and all SACRE members were invited to attend.

Assessment

Jonathan Marshall (RE Adviser) advised members that some work on assessment had been undertaken by Katie Freeman and Barbara Wintersgill. Devon and Torbay were also undertaking work on this. Members agreed that Plymouth SACRE fund Katie Freeman to continue her work on assessment.

RE SACRE news

Jonathan Marshall (RE Adviser) advised members –

- (g) he sent an annual update to all Plymouth schools to remind them how SACRE supports RE and what it can fund;
- (h) two Plymouth schools had received grants of £250 to support the development of RE in their schools. No applications for this grant had been received so far this year and it was possible that SACRE could award eight of these grants each year;
- (i) the SACRE page on the ‘School Room’ page of the Plymouth City Council website contained links to key RE websites;
- (j) plans were underway to hold three teaching sessions on ‘Teaching Judaism’ at Plymouth Synagogue in February 2017;
- (k) collective worship was an important issue, and a meeting on this subject would be held at Hyde Park School on Monday 28 November at 4.05 pm;
- (l) the South West SACRE Conference would be held on Monday 6 March 2017 at Dillington in Somerset, and funding was available for 2 members of SACRE to attend.

Agreed that the Democratic Support Officer would send a reminder to SACRE members regarding the South West SACRE Conference.

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD)

Jonathan Marshall (RE Adviser) provided members with an update on HMD 2017. Members were advised –

- (m) SACRE had always supported HMD with funding and events. however there was no capacity to organise any events in the city centre in 2017;
- (n) it was hoped that Solly Irving would to visit Plymouth again in 2017;
- (o) schools were being encouraged to support HMD;
- (p) it was possible that Plymouth City Council could provide some additional funding for HMD, however they would not be able to provide any staff cover to organise and co-ordinate events;
- (q) the HMD website www.HMD.org.uk provided resources for all age groups;
- (r) Barbara Wintersgill had links with a local community choir – Brent Singers – who were hoping to work with a local school to premier a piece of music for HMD.

The Chair thanked Jonathan Marshall and Katie Freeman for their reports.

(Gary Fitcher left the meeting part way through this agenda item)

20. **Plymouth Centre for Faiths and cultural Diversity (PCFCD) news/developments**

Jonathan Marshall (RE Adviser) provided members with an update on the latest news and developments from the Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity (PCFCD).

Members were advised that the PCFCD, which had always been based on the Salisbury Road Primary School site, had been given notice to move, due to the school's expansion. The centre is now exploring alternative premises on the University Technical College (UTC) site in Devonport. There was the possibility that the centre would have to close temporarily for the duration of the move.

The Chair thanked Jonathan Marshall for his report.

21. **Date and venue of next meeting**

The next SACRE meeting would be held on Monday 27 March 2017 at 1.30 pm in the Council House.