

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Monday 25 March 2019

PRESENT:

Martin Edmonds, in the Chair.

Councillors Mrs Aspinall, Drean, Mrs Johnson, McDonald, Morris and Tuohy.

Margaret Thompson, Liz Hill, Katie Freeman, Dr Judith Beckman, Dr Catherine Bowness, Emma Butler, Sara Wells, Claire Linden

Apologies for absence: Gwen Hughes, Malc Halliday and Jono Madeley.

Also in attendance: Heather Ogburn (Senior Leadership Adviser) and Helen Rickman (Democratic Advisor).

The meeting started at 1.00 pm and finished at 1.45 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.

60. **Declarations of Interest**

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

61. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

62. **Chair's Urgent Business**

Under this item, Heather Ogburn (Senior Leadership Adviser), advised Members that the Home Secretary had made £1.6m of funding available to faith communities in reaction to possible security concerns after the recent attack at a New Zealand Mosque.

Members noted the update.

63. **Welcome to new Members**

There were no new members to welcome to SACRE.

64. **Draft Annual Report 2018/19**

Members noted the Draft Annual Report 2018/19.

65. **Plymouth RE Hub and Learn Teach Read - verbal update**

Katie Freeman advised Members that the Plymouth RE Hub had met four times and was due to run a session on creative story telling.

Members noted the update.

66. **Local and National Developments - verbal update**

Heather Ogburn (Senior Leadership Advisor) provided Members with a brief update on the Local and National Developments, OFSTED - The New Curriculum, and the Agreed Syllabus Update.

Members were advised that –

- (a) the working party were in favour of joining Devon and Torbay in using RE Today for the Agreed Syllabus – the Agreed Syllabus launch was scheduled for Monday 8 July 2019. The syllabus and training would be free for all maintained schools (one place per school) however academies, free schools and public schools could opt in for £65;
- (b) there was no funding for free places for the Agreed Syllabus Conference for schools other than the maintained schools noted in (a) above; it was considered that £65 was a good price for a day's training;
- (c) the new proposals from Ofsted didn't focus upon RE specifically; it was highlighted that schools had the opportunity to see what was most appropriate for them in terms of RE;
- (d) Ofsted had not undertaken subject inspections for a number of years however the emphasis on the current curriculum included a focus on subjects.

Members noted the update and agreed with the decision of the working party to use RE Today for the Agreed Syllabus.

67. **OFSTED - the new curriculum**

This item was discussed above at minute 66.

68. **Agreed Syllabus Update - verbal update**

This item was discussed above at minute 66.

69. **Student Voice - verbal update**

Students were not present at the meeting however it was hoped that some would be able to attend SACRE in the future or provide written submissions for Members to consider.

70. **Update from Members - verbal update**

Under this item Members discussed the following:

- (a) the valuable work provided by the Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity (CFCD) and the necessity for a new office space to be identified by the summer (at low cost);
- (b) that the CFCD was urgently looking for more Christian and Buddhist faith speakers due to high demand;
- (c) there was an excitement around the new curriculum which was focused around reading – it was considered that this was of significant benefit to RE;
- (d) that SACRE needed to consider, in the next municipal year, their role in monitoring collective worship; it was discussed that in some schools RE was being taught in assembly time and this was of concern;
- (e) It was highlighted that a briefing note on collective worship was provided to schools previously; it was agreed that the document would be sent to Liz Hill and Katie Freeman to check if the information needed to be refreshed. Print outs would be available on the day of the Agreed Syllabus Launch to help raise awareness of best practice;
- (f) the examination statistics contained within the draft annual report highlighted the trend that fewer students and schools were entering exams for RE however those that did participate did well;
- (g) the benefits of the GCSE RE short course and the concern that students were not given enough time to adequately learn RE in schools;
- (h) that student participation at SACRE and the voice of the child could be presented by either student presence at the meeting, or by students submitting written work or pictures. Members discussed the benefit of SACRE setting a question or topic for students to be able to respond to in order to give some focus to responses; it was agreed that this idea could be discussed at the Hub and the CFCD.

Members noted the updates provided.

71. **Dates of future meetings for 2019/20**

Members noted the future SACRE dates as listed below:

- 8 July 2019; to be changed due to a clash with the syllabus launch;
- 11 November 2019;
- 23 March 2020.