

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Monday 9 March 2009

PRESENT:

Mrs Martin, in the Chair.

Councillor Stark, Vice Chair.

Mrs Abubakar, Mrs Armitage, Councillor Aspinall, Mr Basquill, Mrs Bowness, Rev, Chave, Councillor Mrs Foster, Fr Gregory, Mr Grainger, Clare Hamon, Mrs Hill, Councillor James, Mr Knight, Ms Legma (substitute for Mr Dragden), Mr Lyddon, Councillor McDonald, Miss McVickers and Ms Mitchell.

Apologies for absence: Mr Blackler, Mrs Briggs, Councillor Drean, Mr Donkin, Dr Lee, Dr Saha and Mrs Shelmerdine.

Also in attendance: Mr Marshall and Mrs Pearce.

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.25 pm.

58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by SACRE members.

59. MINUTES

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2008 be approved.

60. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

The chair -

- (i) welcomed Kelsang Legma, who was substituting for Kelsang Dragden, to her first SACRE meeting;
- (ii) informed members that teachers and students from Drake Primary School would be attending the meeting at 11am to give a presentation on their recent HMI inspection.

61. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY - FEEDBACK AND FUTURE PLANS

Reverend Chave gave an update on the Holocaust Memorial Day and informed members that –

- (i) despite inclement weather there had been a good turn out;
- (ii) three schools were represented at the event – Ridgeway, St. Boniface and Notre Dame.

The Religious Education Adviser reminded SACRE that -

- (iii) each year a national event was hosted somewhere in the UK and that Plymouth could apply to host it in 2012 which would coincide with the 250th anniversary of the synagogue;
- (iv) all correspondence relating to the bid would be sent to the Chief Executive and so it was important to make him aware of the event before any correspondence is received.

Resolved that Mrs Bowness -

- (1) send a letter of thanks from the Holocaust Memorial Fund Trust to the three schools which attended the event;
- (2) circulate information on host city programmes and host city requirements.

62. **SACRE SUB GROUP AND WORKING GROUPS**

The Religious Education Adviser informed SACRE that the sub group had not yet met but was due to meet imminently.

63. **HMI INSPECTION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - REPORT AND REFLECTION**

The Deputy Head Teacher of Drake Primary School and some of the pupils from year 6 gave a presentation on the a HMI Inspection focussing on years 2 and 6 and informed SACRE that -

- (i) the inspector had interviewed staff and pupils and had looked at pupil work and documents produced by the school including a portfolio on religious education provision;
- (ii) the inspector thought that that the portfolio was a good document with clear objectives;
- (iii) overall the assessment of religious education in the school was good;
- (iv) pupils had demonstrated their knowledge better verbally than they had in writing;
- (v) the school already strived to promote community cohesion but would look to include more faiths in their activities and events;
- (vi) two teaching assistants with a special interest in Religious Education had taught the pupils during the teaching staff's PPA periods;

SACRE thanked the school for their very clear and enjoyable presentation.

Resolved to send a letter of thanks to the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors.

64. **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION UPDATES**

- (i) **The Impact of the Religious Education Syllabus**
The Religious Education Adviser informed SACRE that the Ofsted website contained reports on 15 Plymouth schools from inspections over the past 6 months. None of the reports gave mention to religious education or collective worship.

SACRE members commented that –

- (i) training on religious education should be organised for teachers but teacher cover costs should be reimbursed to encourage attendance;
- (ii) a religious education showcase event could be beneficial and could include examples of children's work and provide an opportunity for schools to show what they have been doing with regard to religious education.
- (ii) **Making Sense of Religion**
The Religious Education Adviser gave a presentation a recent report by Ofsted entitled 'making sense of religion' and informed SACRE that -

- (i) the report recognised that religious education offered both educational and cultural contribution to society and towards community cohesion;
- (ii) from September 2008 Ofsted had started to assess schools leadership teams on their promotion of community cohesion;
- (iii) the press response to the report has been somewhat negative.

SACRE enquired as to whether Plymouth City Councils' Social Inclusion Unit could help with monitoring or advice in relation to managing religious intolerance or incidents of a racist nature.

- (iii) **Preventing Violent Extremism**
The Religious Education Adviser gave an update on the Department for Children, Schools and Families publication "Learning together to be safe" – a tool kit to help schools contribute to the prevention of violent extremism' and informed SACRE that –
 - (i) Plymouth was considered regionally, as an example of good practice with respect to its partnership working on the wider 'prevent' strategy;
 - (ii) it was important not to focus too exclusively on Islamic groups as there was extremism in other religions too;
 - (iii) a conference entitled "learning together to be safe" would take place at the Holiday Inn, Plymouth on 19 March.

65. PLYMOUTH CENTRE FOR FAITHS AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The Religious Education Adviser informed SACRE that the trustees would be meeting at the centre on the day after this meeting to consider ways of taking the Centre forward, allowing him more time to focus on Religious Education and Community Cohesion. The centre was also heavily involved in the "prevent" agenda and had been commissioned to facilitate training.

SACRE congratulated the Religious Education Adviser, Jonathan Marshall on his MBE and on the work he has undertaken in founding the Centre and the contribution to the Plymouth community.

66. SOUTH WEST ANNUAL SACRE'S CONFERENCE

SACRE received information on the South West Annual SACRE conference which would take place on 24 March 2009. Any members wishing to attend should email the Religious Education Adviser by the end of the day after this meeting.

67. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved that meetings for the next municipal year (2009/10) take place at 10am on –

- (1) Monday 22 June 2009;
- (2) Monday 30 November 2009;
- (3) Monday 8 March 2010.