

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Monday 5 March 2012

PRESENT:

Helena Mitchell in the Chair.

Teresa Griffiths, Vice Chair.

Councillor Aspinall, Alison Bradley, Cathy Bowness, Father G Carpenter, Clare Hamon, Liz Hill, Councillor Gordon, Anna Kelly, Councillor Singh, Councillor Stark and Dr Barbara Wintersgill.

Apologies for absence: Zainab Abubakar, Brendan Brookshaw, Rev P Chave, Councillor Drean, Gwen Hughes, Fiona Hutchings, Ben Kerr, Caroline McVicker, Dr Jatindra Saha and Pam Shelmerdine.

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

The meeting started at 1.30 pm and finished at 3.45 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.

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Name	Subject	Reason	Interest
Councillor Aspinall	Minute 35. Plymouth Centre for Faith's and Cultural Diversity	School Governor at Salisbury Road Primary School	Personal

28. MINUTES

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2011 are confirmed as a correct record, subject to Councillor Aspinall being marked as present.

29. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

30. WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The Chair welcomed Dr. Barbara Wintersgill to her first SACRE meeting and announced that –

- (a) Mrs Cathy Slow had replaced Richard Maudsley from the Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter;
- (b) Mr Tim Lyddon had resigned.

31. **HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY**

The RE Adviser provided an update on a successful series of events held for Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January 2012. Members were informed that –

- (a) there was a very moving lunch time event held at Mount Edgcumbe, which was attended by the Lord Mayor;
- (b) an all day event was held at Plymouth College of Art and Design where a number of Plymouth's students' artwork was on show in the build up to an evening of reflection event;
- (c) the evening of reflection event, titled the 'the others', gave students who had recently visited Auschwitz the opportunity to share their personal experiences and feelings from their visit. Other speakers at the event included Travellers and representatives from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community. The event was concluded with attendees being asked to light a candle in memory of all those people who had suffered from persecution;
- (d) Solly Irving, a Jewish survivor of the Holocaust visited nine Plymouth secondary schools and met the Lord Mayor during the week leading up to Holocaust Memorial Day, delivering a positive and powerful message about the Holocaust and highlighting the importance of day.

32. **LOCAL AND NATIONAL UPDATES AND THE NEW OFSTED FRAMEWORK**

The RE Adviser provided SACRE Members with an update on the new OFSTED Framework. Members were informed that –

- (a) the new inspection framework came into effect in January 2012 and specified that inspections continued to report on the quality of education provided in the school, focusing its priorities on the following four objectives –
 - the achievement of pupils at the school;
 - the quality of teaching in the school;
 - the quality of the leadership in and management of the school;
 - the behaviour and safety of pupils at the school;
- (b) in addition to the four objectives OFSTED would also take into account

the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, as part of assessing the overall effectiveness of the school;

- (c) although the framework was in its early days it was considered important that SACRE continued to support and develop RE locally as this could make a significant contribution to promoting the opportunity for pupils to be able to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness;
- (d) recently Lipson Community College were awarded an outstanding rating in relation to its spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.. But under the same objective no reference was made to SMSC during the inspection of a local primary school.

With regard to national updates members were informed that –

- (e) on 15 February 2012 the Queen had addressed the Archbishop of Canterbury and senior Faith leaders from the other eight world religions in a speech which spoke of religion and the role of the Church of England. The Queen’s speech raised issues and, in some quarters, caused some controversy which led to RE being a major source of national debate;
- (f) the RE debate had been discussed on a number of media programmes including Radio 4 and the BBC’s Andrew Marr show as well as being discussed during a Faith lecture series at Westminster, hosted by Charles Clarke MP; one lecture was on “the place of faith in schools”;
- (g) this debate has raised the question nationally about ‘what is RE for’ and ‘what is the place of faith in schools’;
- (h) the government launched a new strategy in February which set out its approach to creating the conditions for integration. This approach replaced the previous Government’s community cohesion policy;
- (i) “Creating the conditions for integration” was seen as a vital issue for local communities and focused on five key factors;
 - common ground – a clear sense of shared aspirations and values, which celebrates what we have in common rather than our differences;
 - responsibility – a strong sense of our mutual commitments and obligations, which brings personal and social responsibility;
 - social mobility – people able to realise their potential to get on in life;
 - participation and empowerment – people of all backgrounds have the opportunities to take part, be heard and take decisions in local and national life;

- tackling intolerance and extremism – a robust response to threats, whether discrimination, extremism or disorder, that deepen division and increase tensions;
- (j) SACRE could have a role to play in promoting the creating conditions for integration programme in schools through the development of the RE syllabus.

On issues of local concern members were informed that –

- (k) the RE syllabus would be reviewed in 2012 as it had now been five years since the last review, although, it would only be slightly amended as it was recognised nationally as a very good syllabus;
- (l) Barry Keel, Chief Executive Plymouth City Council would be stepping down from his post after the local elections in May 2012 and Bronwen Lacey, former Director of Children and Young People had left the authority in early 2012. Colin Moore, the Assistant Director for Lifelong Learning has also moved on;
- (m) four SACRE members and the RE Adviser would attend the south west regional SACRE conference at Dillington on 27 March 2012.

33. **SACRE WORKING GROUPS**

SACRE was informed that the six key priorities in the SACRE Development Plan 2011 – 2014 had been championed by nominated group representatives who had formed working groups with fellow SACRE members.

Teresa Griffiths, Vice-Chair, who was champion for group three on the key priority – to establish a biennial celebration/exhibition of RE work, informed SACRE that –

- (a) the aim of the group was to seek to establish an event that would promote the work of SACRE and at the same time celebrate the RE work in schools in order to share the message of what religion and religious diversity means to Plymouth;
- (b) the event could be held to coincide with a significant religious date, such as the 250th anniversary of the Synagogue or the launch of the new agreed RE syllabus;
- (c) the group would hold further meetings in order to finalise the event's theme, location, content and date and time.

Mrs Liz Hill, who was champion for group five on the key priority - to revise guidance and identify key resources for collective worship, informed SACRE that –

- (d) the group had met on many occasions and had increased its size by incorporating representatives from many schools;

- (e) the group's focus had been on establishing a rolling annual programme that held key religious dates in order to support schools in planning RE and a purposeful and valuable collective worship programme;
- (f) book resources had been explored through the school library service to create a resource package; this package was hoped to incorporate both multi-sensory and multi-media resources.

SACRE members were further informed by the RE Adviser that –

- (g) SACRE had a budget to support events and programmes of work and this could be used to support the working groups' ideas;
- (h) the SACRE budget had received an extra £5k in order to develop a faith trail focusing on Primary school visits to the Minster Church of St Andrew.

Following the SACRE working groups discussion, SACRE members considered, in small groups, the possibility of using some of the SACRE budget to organise an event to promote 'what is RE for' and 'what is the place for faith in schools'.

Agreed that –

- (1) Mrs Liz Hill would provide a copy of the working group's draft annual programme at the next SACRE meeting;
- (2) the champions of the six working groups would meet to further develop the ideas raised from the group discussion on organising an event to promote 'what is RE for' and 'what is the place for faith in schools'.

34. **VISIT TO SCHOOLS**

Helena Mitchell, Chair, who was champion for Group one on the key priority - to seek on-going opportunities to raise the profile of SACRE, informed SACRE that –

- (a) in the current school term three schools had confirmed they were happy to host a maximum of two SACRE members to observe RE lessons, with a further school confirming for the next school term;
- (b) if a SACRE member intended to visit one of the four schools they needed to confirm their intention with Helena Mitchell, Chair.

Agreed that Ross Johnston, Democratic Support Officer would email all SACRE members the guidelines for visiting schools and the dates and schools that had confirmed they would host SACRE members during RE lessons.

35. **PLYMOUTH CENTRE FOR FAITHS AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

The RE Adviser gave an update on the Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity and informed members that –

- (a) Salisbury Road Primary School was expanding and required the Watts Road site. The school had generously built into the school renovation plans two classrooms for the centre's use. Whilst the building work was ongoing the centre would be temporarily sited in the school's playground in a separate building
- (b) so far 30 schools had responded to buy in the centre's services for 2012 – 2013;
- (c) the centre was exploring a link with the Cultural Café, on the University campus, to host a fortnightly event promoting faiths and cultural diversity;
- (d) the centre had recently provided work experience for two GlobalXchange students, one from Nepal the other from Wales. They had been visiting a number of local schools to do presentations on Nepalese culture.

Members were further informed that the Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity now had its own Facebook page.

36. **UNMET NEEDS NEED IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The RE Adviser informed members that the St. Lukes Trust, Exeter had been successful in bidding for government funding to review RE teaching and were awarded £118k for a three year project.

Members commented that they fully supported the bid and felt that it offered a great opportunity for RE teaching in the South West.

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

Agreed that –

- (1) the next meeting of SACRE would be held at 1:30am on Monday 2 July 2012, and subject to agreement, at the Plymouth Islamic Education Trust centre (PIETY), 19 Greenbank Avenue, Plymouth, PL4 8PS. Prior to the SACRE meeting a tour of the Mosque and lunch would be provided to SACRE members commencing at 11:15am;
- (2) SACRE meeting dates for the next municipal year are sent to all SACRE members following the City Council approving its calendar of meetings.

38. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.