

**West Sussex Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education**

17 November 2014 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 10.00 am. at County Hall, Chichester

Present:

**Committee A**

Jenny Cole - Quaker  
Mr McKeever - Baptist

**Committee B**

Mrs Black - Church of England  
Mr Simpson - Church of England

**Committee C**

Mrs Appleby - Headteacher representative  
Mrs Jagger - Headteacher representative  
Mr Luckin - Headteacher representative

**Committee D**

Mr Evans - Local Education Authority  
Mr Griffiths (Chairman) - Local Education Authority  
Ms Kennard - Local Education Authority  
Mr Quinn - Local Education Authority  
Mr Smytherman - Local Education Authority

Apologies were received from Mrs Hine and Mrs Smith (Church of England) Mr John (Methodist) and Mr Hunt (Local Education Authority).

**Chairman's Welcome and Introductions**

68. The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting and informed SACRE that Mr Brown (Committee D) and Mr Walsh (Committee C) had resigned from SACRE.

**Members' interests**

69. There were none declared.

**Minutes**

70. Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 16 June be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

**Results in Public Examinations**

71. The Senior Advisor introduced a report by the Director of Communities Commissioning (copy appended to the signed minutes) and explained that data detailing how many pupils had taken the GCSE short course had not been received yet. Should these results become available they could be reported to a future meeting of SACRE.

72. SACRE Members made a number of comments including those that follow:

- Queried how the missing results for nine schools would be obtained. *The Senior Advisor indicated that it was likely that no pupils at these schools had taken the exam which was why there were no results, so in this respect they were not missing.*
- Noted that the increase in the number of pupils taking exams could be linked to the higher number of pupils at GCSE age following the rising birth rate over a number of years.
- Asked whether a breakdown of results by geographical area could be provided. *The Senior Advisor agreed to look at creating this breakdown and circulating the resulting information to SACRE members.*
- Highlighted that the change from a modular course, where pupils take exams in stages over two years, to a linear type of course, where pupils were required to sit a final exam, could have led to a resultant decline in the performance of pupils in West Sussex.
- Noted that the final figure in table 4 should be minus 25.5.

73. SACRE noted the report.

#### **Annual Report 2013/14**

74. The Senior Advisor introduced the SACRE annual report (copy appended to the signed minutes) which summarised the items considered by SACRE over the previous school year and advice it had given.

75. The following comments were made in discussion; SACRE Members: -

- Queried where the report was kept and how it was publicised. *The Senior Advisor indicated that the report was available via the West Sussex website. SACRE members suggested that a link to the report should be sent to all schools to improve awareness of the report and its content. The Senior Advisor agreed that, once this year's report was finalised an email containing a link would be sent to all headteachers.*
- Raised concern that the report, in the main, focussed on secondary education and exam results and contained little reference to Religious Education in the primary sector. SACRE members agreed to a suggestion that an item on primary RE provision would be added to the agenda of the Primary Headteachers Executive meeting to enable discussion about good practice in schools and seek advice on developing networks across primary schools.
- Highlighted that the interaction between Churches and their local schools should be investigated. *The Chairman indicated this may be a suitable issue for consideration as an agenda item at a future meeting of SACRE.*
- Raised concern about the lack of RE subject advisors and general support available to schools from the Learning Service and the potential for a drop in standards in Religious Education as a consequence. *The Chairman agreed that a letter should be written to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills highlighting this issue.*
- Agreed the following changes to the report: -
  - Correction of the year on page 1
  - That the words 'for example' be added to the beginning of appropriate paragraphs on page 2 of the section on Collective worship.

- Noted that, as part of obtaining their funding agreement, academies were required to indicate which RE syllabus they would be following. *The Senior Advisor explained that if academies chose to use the County Council syllabus initially they could alter this at a future date. He indicated that, due to the proposed revisions to the existing syllabus, he would need to clarify which academies were still using the County Council syllabus so that they were alerted to the proposed changes.*
- Suggested that consideration be given to including an academy representative as a member of SACRE.

76. Resolved that:

- (1) SACRE agree the annual report with the amendments noted in minute 75
- (2) SACRE support the intention to engage further with the primary sector
- (3) A link to the annual report be sent to all headteachers once the report is finalised.
- (4) A letter be sent to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills highlighting the Committee's concerns about the lack of RE subject advisors and general support from the Learning Service and the potential for a drop in standards in Religious Education.

### **Date of future meetings**

10.00 am, 2 March 2015

The meeting closed at 11.00 am.

### **Chairman**