

West Sussex Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

18 June 2012 – At a meeting of the Committee held at County Hall, Chichester

Present:

Derek James (Chairman)	-	Baptist
Jenny Cole	-	Quaker
Farhang Tahzib	-	Baha'I
Andrew Simpson	-	Diocese of Chichester
Rachel Moriarty	-	Diocese of Chichester
Angela Smith	-	Diocese of Chichester
Iris Leech	-	Salvation Army
Rosemary Appleby	-	Teacher representative
Kim Brown	-	Teacher representative
Bob Smytherman	-	West Sussex County Council

Apologies were received from Mohindar Galowalia (Sikh), Dr Patel (Hindu), Sheila Kerr (Teacher representative), Donna Jagger (Teacher representative), David Sheldon (WSCC), Michael Brown (WSCC), Peter Griffiths (WSCC), Warwick Hellawell (WSCC)

Chairman's Welcome and Introductions

64. The Chairman welcomed all members to the meeting.

Members' interests

65. There were none declared.

Membership of SACRE

66. The Chairman welcomed Andrew Simpson to SACRE as a new member for the Diocese of Chichester.

67. The Senior Advisor – Support and Intervention and Religious Education stated that owing to an increased number of vacancies, new representatives were being sought for all constituent committees of SACRE.

68. SACRE requested that the senior advisor explore options for an academies representative.

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2012

69. Resolved – the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 5 March be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman, with the following amendments

- Mo Shilliday to be removed from list of attendees
- 49. Heading to read 'Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2011'
- 63. Next meeting date to read 18 June 2012.

Agreed Syllabus Revision

70. The Senior Adviser introduced the attached report and informed SACRE that following the sub-group's initial meeting the Religious Education Council had announced it would be producing revised guidelines in autumn 2012. The sub-group had therefore decided to delay further consideration until the REC guidelines were produced.

71. The Senior Advisor confirmed that in the event of an extended delay, the existing syllabus could be retained on an interim basis.

72. The Senior Adviser informed SACRE that all schools had received a hard copy and a pdf version of previous syllabuses. In future it would be possible to consider more user-friendly and visually appealing web-based presentations.

73. The Senior Advisor agreed to consider ways the 'Principles of Religious Education' could be presented in a more user-friendly format for teachers and also to ensure that these was appropriately cross-referenced throughout the syllabus.

74. The Senior Advisor informed SACRE that the relationship of academies to the syllabus was complex as whilst all current academies in West Sussex were required to teach RE as part of their funding agreement, it was for individual academies to choose how to adopt the syllabus.

Collective Worship in Schools

75. The Senior Advisor introduced current guidance note, produced in 2009, and suggested that SACRE might wish to consider whether the content and presentation required updating.

76. SACRE agreed that the current guidance was visually unappealing and lacked an inspirational emphasis. It also failed to provide justification of collective worship's value to schools and pupils and omitted consideration of reflective spaces within schools.

77. A teacher representative stated that examples of good practice and a list of approved advisory bodies would be helpful for many schools, particularly as non-specialists often found collective worship challenging and should therefore be included in a revised document.

78. The Senior Advisor noted SACRE's requests and undertook to provide a refreshed draft document for further consideration at the next meeting.

79. The Senior Advisor informed SACRE that the current OFSTED Inspection focus did not focus directly upon Religious Education and Collective Worship, however feedback was provided on Spiritual Development. Whilst church schools were also subject to Section 48 inspections, the results of these were not presented to SACRE.

Applications Regarding Collective Worship

80. The Senior Advisor explained that one of SACRE's statutory duties was to consider requests from schools to conduct collective worship that is other than wholly or mainly of a Christian nature. The procedure for this was outlined in the attached report.

81. The Senior Advisor stated that the process had never been invoked in West Sussex, although there were some examples from other Authorities.

82. The Senior Advisor informed SACRE that as state-funded independent schools, academies were not subject to the same process. Rather, this would be determined through their individual funding agreements.

83. SACRE requested that the procedure was updated to reflect changes in role specification and also to ensure that relevant extracts from the 1996 Education Act were fully incorporated. The Senior Advisor also undertook to provide SACRE members with examples of cases from other authorities, as a training tool.

Complaints Procedure

84. The Senior Advisor introduced the attached report, which outlined the process for parents to complain regarding the provision of religious education in authority controlled schools. As no complaints had yet been received, the procedure had remained untested.

85. The Senior Advisor stated that for voluntary-aided church schools, complaints regarding the teaching of RE would be directed to SACRE, whilst any complaints regarding collective worship would be directed to the Diocese.

86. SACRE agreed that the procedure was adequate as presented, and requested that the senior advisor ensured all role titles were up to date.

Dates of future meetings

87. The next meeting of the West Sussex SACRE would be held on Monday, 5 November 2012 at 10.00 a.m. in County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting closed at 11.20am