

WEST SUSSEX STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

20 June 2011 – At a meeting of the Committee held at County Hall, Chichester/

Present:

Derek James (Vice Chairman)	-	Baptist
Susan Hibberd	-	Quaker
Farhang Tahzib	-	Baha'I
Dr Patel	-	Hindu
Mo Shilliday	-	Diocese of Chichester
Susan Thompson	-	Diocese of Chichester
Kim Brown	-	Teacher representative
Michael Brown	-	West Sussex County Council
Bob Smytherman	-	West Sussex County Council

In attendance:

Nigel Bloodworth	-	West Sussex County Council
James Ironside	-	West Sussex County Council

Apologies were received from Rachel Moriarity (Diocese of Chichester), Angela Smith (Diocese of Chichester), David Fetteroll (Roman Catholic), Mohindar Galowalia (Sikh), Dr Patel (Hindu), Lesley Wilkins (Jewish), Malcolm Hawke (Teacher representative), Sheila Kerr (Teacher representative), Gordon Parry (Teacher representative), Warwick Hellawell (Chairman, WSCC) Peter Griffiths (WSCC), David Sheldon (WSCC)

1. Apologies for absence were received from the Chairman, Warwick Hellawell, therefore Mr James as vice-chairman took the chair for this meeting.

Members' interests

2. There were none declared.

Membership of SACRE

3. The chairman informed members that Mrs Donna Jagger had joined SACRE as a Teacher Representative. It was noted that David Fetteroll would no longer be attending SACRE. Derek James thanked him for all his work with SACRE and requested a letter of thanks from the Committee be sent to David.

Action: Nigel Bloodworth/James Ironside

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2011

4. Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 June 2011 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman

Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

5. Members noted the update circulated with the agenda.

Urgent Matters

6. There were none.

Agreed Syllabus Developments

7. The Senior Adviser - Support and Intervention and Religious Education introduced the report and informed the meeting that the current syllabus was a total revision of the previous version and asked SACRE to consider whether it felt the current version was still fit for purpose and whether they would prefer to again revise the current content or replace it.
8. It was agreed that five years was a short period for schools and it was not desirable to create unnecessary instability for teaching staff. Members emphasised that the current syllabus is fit-for-purpose for teaching staff.
9. The Senior Adviser - Support and Intervention and Religious Education asked SACRE to consider the eight possible principles outlined in the attached report as guidelines for the development of the new syllabus.
10. The Committee commented that a focus upon outcomes, rather than process, should form the focus of the guiding principles, particularly as official documentation emphasises quality outcome. The following, alternative wording for the first principle was suggested:

"The new syllabus should reflect evidence of best practice and the views of teachers, students and other stakeholders"

Following discussion the Senior Adviser - Support and Intervention and Religious Education emphasised the need to retain a focus upon the most effective methods of obtaining feedback from teachers and pupils on which aspects respectively, of the syllabus and teaching, currently work and those needing revision.
11. Principles two, three and four were agreed.
12. Principle five was also agreed although there was some discussion as to the extent the principal audience should also include parents and/or pupils.
13. Principle six was recognised as an area of potential uncertainty as the current syllabus focused upon key stages 1,2 and 3, whilst schools follow requirements of exam boards for GCSE option students. It was noted that many schools offering GCSE options and non-exam courses followed the guidelines of the former, although without the final exam.
14. Principles seven and eight were also agreed; the strong support of Sussex Humanists was noted for the wording of principle seven. The Senior Adviser - Support and Intervention and Religious Education agreed that the principles would be revised to reflect an overriding focus upon outcomes.

Action: Nigel Bloodworth

15. According to the Senior Adviser - Support and Intervention and Religious Education, SACRE was required to appoint a steering group to prepare the new syllabus draft, which can then be agreed at the subsequent statutory conference. The steering group must comprise one person from each of the four committees constituting SACRE. The following members were selected:

Committee A: Mr James, Dr Tahzib and Dr Patel

Committee B: Mrs Thompson

Committee C: Mrs Brown

Committee D: Mr Hellowell in absentia. (Mr Smytherman agreed to assume responsibility if Mr Hellowell is unable)

16. In response to a query as to whether a representative from a non-religious perspective could attend, it was noted that by law the steering group membership had to be drawn from SACRE members. A date for the first meeting of the steering group would be arranged, after the end of the current school term.

Action: Nigel Bloodworth

17. The Senior Adviser - Support and Intervention and Religious Education explained that SACRE could choose whether to form the syllabus through a statutory conference, which would be legally separate from SACRE, although comprised of nominated members from each of SACRE's committees. Alternatively a new body could be created, operating in isolation to SACRE. There was unanimous agreement to proceed via the former option. Nominations would be sought for the conference; the County Council would then formally appoint these.

OFSTED Framework 2012

18. The Committee noted that although the consultation for the 2012 Framework finished on 20 May, OFSTED had agreed to consider additional comments from SACRE as they were not due to convene prior to the end of the consultation period.

19. The Committee considered the draft response to OFSTED, highlighting the following specific points

- The need to ensure the importance of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) education continued
- Seek assurance that SMSC will be separate entry in OFSTED reports to ensure ease of identification
- Schools not meeting statutory requirements would be reported (this was not part of the current framework)

20. SACRE expressed its support for the draft response.

21. The Committee considered support for RE subject leaders, and noted that the County Council no longer provides subject support to schools. This could instead be accessed from:

- School-to-school support and advanced skills teachers
- Schools could also look to the Diocese for support
- Independent advisors, if the school had the budget available

22. Members questioned the level of support available for governing bodies. It was noted that while there was a great deal of support available, RE was rarely included in the materials offered.

Developments in National Religious Education

23. SACRE noted the following issues of national importance:

- International Baccalaureate – developments would be reported to future meetings
- Guidance for RE in Academies – Although state-funded, academies operated as independent schools and were not required to follow statutory requirements. Currently, RE was taught in academies through funding agreements. It was therefore very important for SACRE to retain oversight of the development of the academies programme, as RE could not automatically be assumed to form part of the curriculum. In particular, SACRE would need to be aware that it would be the choice of academies as to whether they had a relationship with SACRE. SACRE might also decide in future to co-opt representatives from academies.

Any other business

25. There was none.

Dates of future meetings

26. The next meeting of the West Sussex SACRE would be held on Monday, 7 November 2011 at 10.00 a.m. in County Hall, Chichester.

27. The remaining meeting for the current municipal year would be

Monday, 5 March 2012 at 10.00 a.m.

The meeting closed at 11.55a.m