

West Sussex Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

27 February 2017 – At a meeting of the West Sussex Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education held at 11.00 at County Hall, Chichester

Present:

Committee A

Jenny Cole	-	Quaker
Mr Ward	-	Roman Catholic
Mr McKeever	-	Baptist
Mr Firoozmand	-	Baha'i

Committee B

Mrs Hine	-	Church of England
Mrs Smith (Vice Chairman)	-	Church of England

Committee C

Committee D

Mrs Field	-	Local Education Authority
Mr Griffiths (Chairman)	-	Local Education Authority
Mrs Jones	-	Local Education Authority
Ms Kennard	-	Local Education Authority
Mr Quinn	-	Local Education Authority
Mr Smytherman	-	Local Education Authority

Apologies: Mr Evans and Mr Sheldon (Local Education Authority), Mr Simpson (Church of England)

Absent: Mrs Black (Church of England), Mrs Costello, Mrs Dutson and Mrs Jagger (Teacher Association Representatives), Imam Nawab (Muslim)

Members' Interests

155. Mr Smytherman declared a personal interest in respect of item 7 (Inspection Results for West Sussex Schools) as a foundation governor of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Worthing.

Youth Voice Conference – 5 July 2017

156. SACRE received a verbal update from Dr Graeme Smith (Head of Department, Theology, Philosophy and Religious Studies at the University of Chichester) as well as from Jemma Georgeou, Alfie Scott and Abigail Turner (year 10 students from Bishop Luffa School, Chichester) during which SACRE learned that: -

- The students wanted to hold an event similar to a conference they had attended in Hampshire
- That event had changed students' attitudes towards RE
- The West Sussex event on 5 July 2017 at Chichester University Bognor Regis campus has the theme 'Would the world be a better place without religion?'

- The event would consist of an opening plenary session followed by two workshops before lunch and a further workshop followed by a plenary after lunch
- Workshops would be given by a range of faith groups and other organisations
- There were places for 64 year 8 students with facilitation by 16 year 10 students

157. The following points were covered in discussion: -

- All schools in the county had been made aware of the event and there was interest from outside the county – SACRE members were welcome to remind schools with which they had connections about the event
- Faiths not currently allocated to take part could be added to a reserve list and invited to a future event
- It was hoped that the event would engage year 8 students in RE and open minds to a variety of faiths and beliefs
- Ideally, all workshops should be attended by similar numbers of students
- It was possible that the Council's Small Grants Fund could be a source of funding for the event

158. Those members of SACRE present agreed that: -

- i. The outgoing Chairman of SACRE, Mr Griffiths, should open the event (he agreed)
- ii. New members of SACRE should be made aware of the event
- iii. Details of the Council's Small Grants Fund be sent to Graeme Smith to see if this could help towards the cost of the event

Membership

159. Those SACRE members present noted that those seeking re-nomination to SACRE should progress this with their faith/education group/organisation as members are appointed every four years coinciding with County Council elections which take place this year on 4 May.

160. The Chairman thanked SACRE members for their contributions and support during the term of this SACRE and also thanked Nigel Bloodworth for his fastidious support to SACRE.

161. Mrs Field, Cabinet Member responsible for Education, Schools support and Academy Liaison thanked Mr Griffiths for his Chairmanship of this SACRE on behalf of SACRE members and the Leader of the Council.

Minutes

162. Resolved - that the minutes of the meeting of SACRE held on 14 November are agreed by those present and will be formally approved at the next meeting of SACRE.

Progress Statements

163. Nigel Bloodworth gave the following updates: -

- An approach had been made about West Sussex SACRE joining NASACRE

- No response had been received to the letter to the Minister responsible for the White Paper – ‘Education Excellence Everywhere’ raising SACRE’s concerns over the omission of any reference to RE in the White Paper – Nigel Bloodworth to follow-up

164. Angela Smith, Vice Chairman, gave the following Training update: -

- Three training sessions had taken place, two primary covering 37 primary schools and one secondary with nine secondary schools
- The next session for primary schools was also proving popular
- Venues depended on on costing and availability
- Mrs Hine agreed to circulate her report on her participation in a primary training sessions to all SACRE members

165. Resolved – that those SACRE members present note the updates and would like the new SACRE to consider cross-referencing schools that took part in training with the report of OFSTED reports that comes to each SACRE meeting

Inspection Reports for West Sussex Schools

166. SACRE considered a report by the Director of Education and Skills (copy appended to the signed minutes) which was introduced by Nigel Bloodworth who told SACRE that most schools do well in spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) aspects and that reports included more about how RE promotes SMSC than before.

167. The following points were covered in discussion: -

- Some school Ofsted reports had not commented on SMSC even though it was part of the OFSTED inspection Handbook
- A national survey of RE teachers was taking place to see if RE was being taught in all schools
- SACRE discussed whether individual schools should be named in future reports and felt that this should be decided by the new SACRE

168. Resolved – that those SACRE members present note the report.

Results in Public Examinations

169. SACRE considered a report by the Director of Education and Skills (copy appended to the signed minutes) which was introduced by Nigel Bloodworth who told SACRE that: -

- This report contained more information on the short course and the Fischer Family Trust than the report that went to the last SACRE meeting
- Numbers of students taking the short course were dropping quicker in West Sussex than nationally

170. The following points were covered in discussion: -

- Just over 40% of West Sussex students took an exam in RE – there was no evidence of what RE students who weren’t taking any exams received, however some year 10 and 11 students at some schools studied Social Education/Humanity Studies that contained elements of RE

- A lack of RE teachers could be a reason why less RE was being taught
- The Fischer Family Trust would be unable to help identify what RE non exam students received as it only looked at statistics for those entering exams

171. Resolved – that those SACRE members present note the report and would like the new SACRE to investigate how RE was taught to students that did not enter exams.

Commission on Religious Education

172. SACRE considered a report by the Director of Education and Skills (copy appended to the signed minutes) which was introduced by Nigel Bloodworth who told SACRE that the commission was calling for evidence to assist its review of the legal, education and policy frameworks for RE.

173. The following points were covered in discussion: -

- The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'is had already made a submission to the commission
- Submissions could still be made as there would be an interim report published in the autumn before a final report next summer

174. Resolved – that those SACRE members present note the report and would like the new SACRE to respond to the commission.

Date of future meetings

10.30 am, 12 June 2017

10.30 am, 20 November 2017

10.30 am, 26 February 2018

The meeting closed at 12.28

Chairman