

West Sussex Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

29 February 2016 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 10.00 at County Hall, Chichester

Present:

Committee A

Jenny Cole	-	Quaker
Mrs S Feist	-	Roman Catholic
Mr E John	-	Methodist
Mr McKeever	-	Baptist

Committee B

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

Committee C

Committee D

Mr Evans	-	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 Sheldon	-	Local Education Authority
Mr Smytherman	-	Local Education Authority

Apologies: Mrs Smith (Church of England), Mr Luckin (Teacher Association Representative)

Absent: Imam I Nawab (Muslim), Mr S Tahzib (Baha'i), Mrs Jagger (Teacher Association Representative)

In Attendance: Mr Burrett (Local Education Authority) by invitation.

Due to the fact that no-one from Committee C was present, the meeting was inquorate. SACRE was able to note items, but not formally approve them.

Chairman's Welcome and Introductions

102. In the absence of Mr Griffiths for the start of the meeting, Mr Evans took the Chair (proposed by Ms Kennard and seconded by Mr Quinn).

103. Mr Evans told SACRE that due to a change in Cabinet members, Mr Hunt had resigned from SACRE and his place would be taken by Mr Burrett, the new Cabinet Member for Education & Skills, who would be formally appointed at the County Council's next full meeting on 15 April.

Members' interests

104. No interests were declared.

Minutes

105. An update was provided on actions arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 16 November: -

- Rob Castle to email SACRE members with the number of people that had viewed the SACRE Annual Report online
- Summaries of reports relating to collective worship in Church schools would be brought to SACRE's 13 June meeting covering all information available for the previous 12 months
- Secondary heads were happy for a short questionnaire to measure the number of complaints about religious education – the position of primary heads was not known

106. Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 16 November are agreed by those present and will be formally approved at the next meeting of SACRE.

107. Mr Griffiths took over in the Chair.

Cabinet Member Response

108. Response on clarification of the type of support available to schools, and how school to school support was being promoted so that all schools were aware of it and knew how to access it to come to the June meeting.

Results in Public Examinations

109. SACRE considered a report by the Interim Director of Education and Skills which was introduced by Nigel Bloodworth who told SACRE that: -

- The way results were published had changed, meaning some information such as short course results and subject residuals were still unavailable
- The number of students taking GCSE short courses was likely to decline as they had been taken out of the data set for schools' overall judgements – there were only 776 in 2015, well below numbers in the past
- 40% of students were taking the full course
- A level numbers were slightly down
- AS levels fluctuated due to changing reporting methods

110. The following points/changes were covered in discussion: -

- The 2014 short course figures were not part of the normal data set so did not count in the school tables
- Church schools entered most of their pupils for GCSEs
- It was hard to make a judgement on the number of students getting higher grades at A level as it depended on the cohort and which subjects students chose
- SACRE queried how West Sussex students performed compared to its neighbours

Actions: Nigel Bloodworth to: -

- Send a letter of congratulations to all A Star students on behalf of SACRE
- Compare West Sussex results with statistical neighbours and see if comparisons could also be made with geographical neighbours

- To send an amended version of the report to schools highlighting where improvement in results could be made
- To investigate whether the Council would consider re-joining ALPS to obtain information it held on how well students performed and present it at the June meeting
- To see if the Fischer Family Trust held this information
- To speak to Angela Smith to see if there were any issues around teacher training

111. Resolved – SACRE notes the report.

Agreed Syllabus Training

112. Rosemary Black told SACRE that: -

- Work was underway with the Blue Flag Alliance on training for the new syllabus
- Bookings were coming in for the two primary and one secondary training days arranged so far
- The overall costs and position on funding were not known yet
- £3k had been received from the Council, but a further £7k might be required

113. Nigel Bloodworth reported that after the initial £3k, it was expected that other expenses would be covered by course fees – **Action:** The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills to look into the possibility of further funding from the Council.

114. The following points/changes were covered in discussion: -

- The aim was to have one trained member of staff in each school
- Information leaflets about the training to be appended to the minutes of the meeting

Action: The Chairman to write to all schools urging them to support the training if it went ahead

Proposals for the Future of SACRE's, ASC's RE and Collective Worship

115. Nigel Bloodworth made it clear that the briefing contained proposals only, not new requirements, and sought SACRE's views on the following: -

- A national agreed syllabus to replace all the locally agreed syllabuses
- The repeal of the requirement for collective worship and replacing it with inclusive assemblies/times for reflection
- Guidance on GCSEs

116. The following points/changes were covered in discussion: -

- Religious Education was not part of the National Curriculum as parents had the right to withdraw their children from the subject
- A nationally agreed syllabus might lose some local aspects but be consistent across the country
- It might be useful for one or two members of SACRE to attend the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education conference

and Annual General Meeting on 17 May – **Action:** Nigel Bloodworth to check whether the Council pay for this – any interested members should contact the Chairman

- The pragmatic, idealistic and philosophical approaches to building a religious education curriculum would be considered in future training
- The West Sussex SACRE Annual Report had been sent for audit
- A recent judicial review said that breadth of subject should be provided in the years before students take their GCSEs, but the Department for Education said that as long as the breadth was done, it was not necessary for individual year stages
- SACRE felt it was likely to support the proposals in the briefing if they became firm

Inspection Reports on Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education in West Sussex Schools

117. OFSTED no longer included religious education or collective worship in its inspections, and rarely mentioned either in its reports on spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

118. SACRE notes the NASACRE Briefing and the Department for Education Guidance issued in response to the recent Judicial Review of the Religious Studies GCSE.

Date of future meetings

10.30, 13 June 2016

10.30, 14 November 2016

10.30, 27 February 2017

The meeting closed at 11.30

Chairman