

West Sussex Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

13 June 2016 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 10.30 at County Hall, Chichester

Present:

Committee A

Jenny Cole	-	Quaker
Mr P Ward	-	Roman Catholic
Mr E John	-	Methodist
Mr McKeever	-	Baptist
Mr Firoozmand	-	Baha'i

Committee B

Mrs Black	-	Church of England
Mrs Hine	-	Church of England
Mr Simpson	-	Church of England
Mrs Smith (Vice Chairman)	-	Church of England

Committee C

Mrs Costello	-	Teacher Association Representative
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Committee D

Mr Evans	-	Local Education Authority
Mr Griffiths (Chairman)	-	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 Jones (Local Authority), Mrs Dutson (Teacher Association Representative)

Absent: Mrs Jagger (Teacher Association Representative), Imam Nawab (Muslim)

Chairman's Welcome and Introductions

119. In the absence of Mr Griffiths for the start of the meeting, Mrs Smith (Vice Chairman) took the Chair.

Membership

120. SACRE notes Mr Ward as the new Roman Catholic representative and Mrs Costello and Mrs Dutson as new Teacher Association representatives.

Members' interests

121. No interests were declared.

Minutes

122. It was agreed that point 112, fourth bullet point of the minutes of the 29 February meeting should be changed from '£3k had been received from the Council' to '£3k has been promised from the Council'

123. Resolved –

- i. That the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 16 November are approved.
- ii. That the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 29 February be approved as a correct record with the agreed change above, and that they be signed by the Chairman.

124. Mr Griffiths took over in the Chair.

Progress Statement

125. Nigel Bloodworth gave the following updates: -

- A letter of congratulations had been sent to all A Star students
- A comparison of statistical neighbours was not easy due to the way information was published – officers were working on it
- An amended version of the report on results in public examinations highlighting where improvements could be made had not yet been sent
- The Council had re-joined ALPS, but wouldn't see performance data till next year
- The Fischer Family Trust did not hold information on how well students performed
- Blue Flag had approached the Council offering its services to train teachers in the new agreed syllabus. The Council agreed to provide £3k to get this started, it was then expected that course fees would cover costs

126. Regarding teacher training and recruitment, Mrs Smith reported that: -

- Both Chichester and Brighton universities ran courses to train teachers in RE
- The demand for training could change in the future as sixth form students had to cut their subjects from four to three
- As with other subjects, there was a small field of RE candidate teachers

Inspection Reports for West Sussex Schools

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

- OFSTED now did two types of report – a 'Good' school that remained 'Good' after inspection only got a letter, a different category school (or a 'Good' that changed) got a full report
- Letters would contain less information and 'Outstanding' schools had fewer inspections

128. The following points were covered in discussion: -

- Schools should point out to inspectors the good work done in Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC) so that it was more likely to be mentioned in letters/reports
- Some inspectors might prioritise other areas and not comment on SMSC
- Reports on SMSC were strong in West Sussex schools

129. Resolved – SACRE agrees that: -

- i. The Chairman should write to all schools reminding them of the importance of having Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development in courses, and to highlight the good work done in this area to OFSTED so that it is more likely to get into OFSTED inspection reports/letters
- ii. The Chairman should write to OFSTED with SACRE's concerns that Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development is being omitted from inspection reports or not given a high enough profile
- iii. A report on inspection reports should come to each meeting of SACRE

Religious Education and Collective Worship in Church Schools

130. SACRE considered Section 48 inspection reports for Anglican & Methodist schools and Roman Catholic schools (copies appended to the signed minutes) and learned that: -

Anglican & Methodist Schools

- The examples were from 'Satisfactory', 'Good' and 'Outstanding' schools
- Inspections were carried out over a five year cycle across East and West Sussex
- Work was underway to strengthen RE networks in both primary and secondary settings – these also covered Collective Worship
- Training courses on Collective Worship were ongoing and free resources were available for schools
- A new teaching alliance was being developed in West Horsham

Roman Catholic Schools

- Schools had not yet been inspected on the new framework
- The Catholic Education Service reported that only 20 children nationally had been withdrawn from Collective Worship by their parents

131. Resolved – that SACRE notes the reports.

West Sussex Agreed Syllabus

132. SACRE discussed issues around the West Sussex Agreed Syllabus: -

- 37 primary schools had taken part in two training courses with 16 more on a waiting list – a session for secondary schools was about to be held (nine schools had expressed an interest in the course)
- Take-up of courses had been evenly split between church and community schools and new and experienced teachers
- There was a range of requirements from those asking for training

- There was a shortfall in funding which meant that no more courses could be run

133 Resolved – that if course fees did not cover costs and a shortfall figure could be identified, the Cabinet Member would be asked by SACRE if the Council could make up the difference

Implications for Religious Education of the White Paper – Education Excellence Everywhere

134. SACRE considered a report by the Interim Director of Education and Skills (copy appended to the signed minutes) and covered the following points in discussion: -

- Even though not all schools would now be required to become academies, there were still implications for SACRE
- Academies were required to cover RE and Collective Worship in their funding agreements, but funding agencies did not have to insist that academies taught either
- RE was not one of the five subjects required to be in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), but could be one of the three others that counted in performance tables, however, there was a possibility that schools might prepare students for six or seven possible Ebacc subjects and choose their strongest five, leaving only one or two slots for other subjects
- The majority of current academies have continued to teach the agreed syllabus for RE
- The National Association of Teachers of Religious Education reported that many academies were no longer teaching RE at Key Stage 4 which would lead to less demand for qualified RE teachers
- SACRE expressed concerns that there was no reference to RE in the white paper

135. Committee A proposed that SACRE should advise the local authority to join the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education. This was seconded by Committee B and agreed by SACRE

136. Resolved – that the Chairman of SACRE write to: -

- i. The local authority asking it to consider the Council joining the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education
- ii. 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. The Chairman to ask the Leader of the Council to be a co-signatory of this letter reflecting her letter to the Minister.

A New Settlement – Religion and Belief in Schools

137. SACRE considered the report ‘A New Settlement – Religion and Belief in Schools’ (copy appended to the signed minutes) and felt it raised issues over the future of Collective Worship whether there would be a local or national RE syllabus in the future.

138. Resolved – that SACRE members consider whether or not they would support the recommendations in the report.

Date of future meetings

11.00, 14 November 2016

11.00, 27 February 2017

The meeting closed at 12.19

Chairman