Unconfirmed Minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of SACRE

West Sussex Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

20 November 2017 – At a meeting of the West Sussex Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

Present:

Committee A
Mrs Bell - Jewish
Jenny Cole - Quaker
Mrs Edwards - Baptist
Mr Firoozmand - Bahá’í
Mr Syed - Muslim

Committee B
Mrs Cumming - Church of England
Rev Higgins - Church of England
Mr Simpson - Church of England
Mrs Smith (Vice Chairman) - Church of England

Committee C
No Teacher Representatives

Committee D
Mr Burrett (Chairman) - Local Education Authority
Mrs Jones - Local Education Authority
Mrs Pendleton - Local Education Authority
Mr Petts - Local Education Authority
Mr Quinn - Local Education Authority
Mr Simmons - Local Education Authority
Mr Smytherman - Local Education Authority

Apologies: Mr Ward (Committee A), Maj Warner (Committee B), Mrs Macrae and Rev Millwood (Committee C), and Lt Cdr Atkins (Committee D)

Absent: Mr McCully and Mr Turney (Committee C)

Membership of SACRE

15. Those members of SACRE present approved the co-option of Dr Graeme Smith (Head of Department, Theology, Philosophy and Religious Studies at the University of Chichester) to SACRE. This was to be formally ratified by the next quorate meeting of SACRE.

Declarations of Interest

16. 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.

Minutes

17. The following amendments were requested: -
• Mr Simpson requested that his apologies be recorded for the June meeting instead of being marked as absent as a colleague had rung on his behalf to say he would not be able to make the meeting
• Mrs Smith asked that ‘if a free venue could be found’ be added to the last bullet point of minute 7

18. Resolved – that those members of SACRE present confirmed the minutes as an accurate record, with the amendments requested. The minutes would need to be formally ratified by the next quorate meeting of SACRE.

Youth Voice Conference Update

19. SACRE received a verbal update from Dr Graeme Smith (Head of Department, Theology, Philosophy and Religious Studies at the University of Chichester), Ollie Dixon, Megan Elkins and Lars Evison (students from Bishop Luffa School, Chichester). SACRE learned that: -

• The conference held in July had been a great help to students who benefited from hearing differing views from various religious and non-religious speakers at their workshops
• Pupils from several schools had started planning next year’s event, the theme for which would be the relationship between science and religion and which would take the form of a mixture of large group discussions and small seminars with a variety of speakers from both fields
• It was hoped that this theme would increase the attendance by students who weren’t religious
• SACRE would be kept informed about the development of the event and it was hoped that SACRE would again pay speakers’ expenses.

20. The following points were covered in discussion: -

• The planning committee was made up of students from Bourne Community College (Southbourne), Bishop Luffa School (Chichester), Davison High School and St Andrew’s School (Worthing)
• It was mainly church schools involved as there was no funding to cover teachers’ time to travel to/attend two hour meetings
• The Muslim community would be willing to contribute to funding for the event and maybe sponsorship could also be found
• The University of Chichester provided the venue and staff time free of charge for the 2017 event which all schools were invited to attend
• Finding a different venue could be difficult as it needed to be free with 6 – 8 breakout rooms – Crawley Mosque might be a possibility
• Two non-religious organisations took part in 2017 – the Humanists and Prevent - preventing children and young people from being drawn into terrorism
• It was hoped that speakers for 2018 could be found locally
• All speakers should be respectful of others’ views – a copy of ‘Welcoming visitors into schools’ could be given to all speakers and a teacher would be at each workshop to bring balance to discussions
• Workshops should be more interactive
• The outcomes of the event could be posted online.
Progress Statement

21. Nigel Bloodworth updated SACRE on the following:

- There were five types of school in West Sussex: 125 community schools, 62 academies, 49 voluntary controlled schools, 45 voluntary aided schools, and 2 free schools
- Rev Higgins had volunteered to fill the vacancy on the Determination Panel
- Nigel Bloodworth had written to the Minister responsible for the White Paper ‘Education Excellence Everywhere’ and was waiting for a reply
- Nigel Bloodworth had written to OFSTED about it not reporting on spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) teaching in schools and was waiting for a reply
- There should be eight teachers on SACRE – ACTION: Rob Castle to contact the teachers’ Joint Consultative Committee for more teacher representatives and also the other groups who had not appointed a representative
- Several items were to come to future meetings – ACTION: Nigel Bloodworth to schedule them and advise Rob Castle for future agendas.

Inspection Reports for West Sussex Schools

22. SACRE considered a report by the Director of Education and Skills (copy appended to the signed minutes).

23. The following points were covered in discussion:

- RE and collective worship in Church schools were inspected separately and weren’t part of this report
- Central Church of England Academy, Chichester, had a poor rating for SMSC – it was also in special measures, but the issues were being addressed and progress had been reported through OFSTED monitoring reports
- SMSC was generally strong in West Sussex schools
- SACRE had no influence over how RE was taught in free schools or academies unless they followed the Council’s agreed syllabus
- SACRE felt it would be useful for the report to include the location of schools in future – ACTION: Nigel Bloodworth to arrange for this to happen.

24. Resolved – that those members of SACRE present note the report.

Results in Public Examinations

25. As the data for this item was unavailable it was postponed to the next meeting.

Annual Report 2016 - 2017

26. SACRE considered its Annual Report for 2016 - 2017 (copy appended to the signed minutes).

27. The following points were covered in discussion:

- The report was written for professionals and was put on the Council’s website and sent to the Secretary of State for Education
• It was unfair to compare “A” and AS grades achieved year by year as each cohort of students was likely to have different abilities
• SACRE queried why GCSE grades in 2016 had gone down whilst the numbers taking exams had increased – **ACTION**: Nigel Bloodworth to arrange for this to be raised when the new data was available
• AS levels were reported at year 12, so if any students took them at year 11 they would not be counted in the report
• SACRE requested that: -
  ➢ The following paragraph “West Sussex continues to support SACRE and will provide secure support for the development of the Agreed Syllabus.” be changed to “West Sussex continues to support SACRE and will provide statutory support for the review of the Agreed Syllabus.”
  ➢ The wording for the section on the Youth Voice Conference to be finalised between Angela Smith and Nigel Bloodworth
  ➢ The report be checked thoroughly for errors to dates, spelling and figures
  ➢ More explanatory text to be added to the section on GCSE Trends
• **ACTION**: Nigel Bloodworth to finalise the Annual Report taking into account SACRE’s requests.

28. Resolved – that those members of SACRE present note the report.

**Welcoming Visitors into Schools**

29. SACRE considered a report by the Director of Education and Skills (copy appended to the signed minutes).

30. The following points were covered in discussion: -

• There had been three requests this term for advice on welcoming visitors into schools
• The report was sent to schools on request, but could be put on the Council’s website
• SACRE requested that: -
  ➢ Safeguarding and Health & Safety information (including key personnel) be included in the advice to visitors
  ➢ The advice be highlighted to schools through the regular mailing.

31. Resolved – that those members of SACRE present note the report.

**Religious Education for All**

32. SACRE considered an executive summary of the Commission on Religious Education’s interim report – Religious Education for All (copy appended to the signed minutes).

33. The following points were covered in discussion: -

• The Secretary of State for Education asked the Religious Education Council for this report which it commissioned from the Commission on Religious Education
• Some of the recommendations, including some that affected SACREs, would require primary legislation, which was unlikely to happen
• Regarding the development of SACREs, the Chairman reported that he had attended a regional meeting of SACRE chairmen in October and was keen to
share best practice – **ACTION**: Nigel Bloodworth and the Chairman to liaise over an item on best practice for the next meeting

- SACRE felt that:
  - It should not be involved in promoting community relations
  - The proposal around primary trainees should be supported
  - There should be no right to withdraw from RE in schools
  - More detailed comments should be sent to Nigel Bloodworth for collation.

34. Resolved – that those members of SACRE present note the report.

**Date of future meetings**

10.30 am, 26 February 2018  
10.30 am, 11 June 2018  
10.30 am, 19 November 2018  
10.30 am, 25 February 2019

35. The Chairman told SACRE that this was the last meeting for Nigel Bloodworth who was retiring at Christmas. He thanked Nigel for all the work he had done for SACRE over the past thirty years.

The meeting closed at 12.52pm.

**Chairman**