

Agreed Syllabus Conference – Meeting held on Wednesday, 8th February, 2012.

Present:-

Committee 1 – Christian Denominations and Other Faiths

Zara Choudhary (Islam), Sue Elbrow (The Free Churches), Julie Siddiqi (Islam), Hardip Singh Sohal (Sikhism)

Committee 2 – Church of England

Jo Fageant (Chair), The Rev Alan Bignell, Christine Isles

Committee 3 – Representatives of Teacher Associations

Lynda Bussley (National Union of Teachers)

Committee 4 – Representatives of the Local Authority

Councillors Bains and M S Mann

Apologies for Absence:- Maggie Allen and Stacey (National Association of Head Teachers) and The Rev Andrew Allen (Church of England)

PART 1

4. Minutes of the last meeting held on 12th October, 2012

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 12th October be approved as a correct record.

5. Update on the Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE Review - Jo Fageant

Jo Fageant, Chair of the Slough SACRE, updated the committee on the review of Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE. A number of documents were distributed to the committee which outlined information to be included in the reviewed syllabus.

Meetings had been held with six SACREs and teachers in the local area. The outcome of these meetings was a draft syllabus which would be refined further in upcoming working parties and groups. The key concepts, planning model and the flow charts to be included in the syllabus were outlined for the committee. It was explained that the new syllabus would be less prescriptive than the previous syllabus, but would follow themes to for teachers to cover throughout the year. The three themes would be simplified to cover “Beliefs, Behaving, Belonging”, which corresponded to a set of questions which teachers and pupils would use as a guide to explore different faiths. It was noted that teachers and schools were generally very supportive of the changes to simplify the curriculum and organise the syllabus around questioning and encouraging personal reflection. In the 14-19 syllabus, there had been fewer changes, though some units had been changed slightly. It had also been agreed that students of age 16 plus would receive six hours of RE tuition per year.

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The syllabus also included the faiths to be part of the RE syllabus at different Key Stages. The issue was raised that some faiths, such as Islam, were currently only a mandatory part of the curriculum at Key Stage 3 (11+). However, it was noted that all primary schools in the local area already include Islam in their syllabuses at earlier Key Stages. The lack of prescription allowed schools to be flexible with which faiths to cover.

It was also emphasised that the representatives of the faith groups on the SACRE/ASC would be invited to make contributions to the content of the syllabus and the elements to be covered at each Key Stage. There would be an opportunity at forthcoming syllabus meetings, the dates of which would be sent to all members.

The Agreed Syllabus Conference welcomed the verbal update and the documents provided. In the discussion that following, the committee agreed that changes made to the syllabus were necessary and would hopefully lead to better outcomes in terms of making pupils recognise diversity and more accepting of difference. Members also suggested that funds outstanding in the SACRE balance could be invested in resources which could be attached to the syllabus when published. This was confirmed as a possible use of the remaining SACRE funds.

Resolved – That the report be noted that the Chair to ensure that all faith representatives on the SACRE/ASC be invited to attend forthcoming meetings relating to the finalisation of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE.

6. Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting was to follow the next proposed meeting of the SACRE on Monday 28th May 2012. This date would be confirmed subject to scheduling by Democratic Services and the agreement of these dates at an upcoming meeting of the Council.

Resolved – That the Clerk look into arranging the date of the next meeting for the dates proposed.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.30 pm)