

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education – 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 Stacey (National Association of Head Teachers) and The Rev Andrew Allen (Church of England)

PART 1

12. Minutes of the last meeting held on 12th, October 2011

Resolved – The minutes of the meeting held on 12th October 2012 were approved as a correct record.

13. Matters arising

The Chair outlined the functions of the SACRE to the new members present and explained the function of the Agreed Syllabus Conference which would follow the close of the SACRE meeting.

14. Membership - verbal update

The Clerk updated the Committee on the efforts made by the authority to appoint new Members to the SACRE. Four new members had been appointed to as representatives of the Islamic faith and one new member had been appointed as representative of the Sikh faith. The new members were welcomed to the meeting.

15. RE Trail - verbal update - Lynda Bussley

Lynda Bussley updated the committee on the RE Trail. The RE Trail had been discontinued due to lack of input from local schools. It was hoped that funds remaining could be carried into the next municipal year.

Resolved – That the update be noted.

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16. 2010/11 SACRE Report

The Chair presented the final 2010/11 Annual SACRE Report. It was confirmed that this would be sent to NASACRE and the Secretary of State for their consideration.

In the discussion that followed, Members noted the GCSE and A-Level results achieved in 2010/11. Members also expressed concern over whether the requirement for schools to teach Religious Education up to Key Stage 4 was being followed, particularly in schools where the number of entrants in the GCSE Religious Education exam was low. Members also discussed the services provided to Academies and Voluntary Aided schools in Slough and which services could be provided to these schools by the Local Authority.

Resolved – That the 2010/11 Annual SACRE Report be noted and a copy be sent to NASACRE and the Secretary of State for Education.

17. NASACRE - verbal update - Jo Fageant

The Chair updated the committee on the recent meetings held by National Association of SACREs (NASACRE). The Chair informed the Committee that she would be appointed Secretary of NASACRE in the coming months.

The main areas of discussion held by NASACRE was concern over the relationship between SACREs and schools with Academy status, which do not have to follow the locally agreed RE syllabus. The Department for Education had written to the RE Council reiterating their view that RE would remain a locally determined issue and thus determined by the Local Authority or School themselves. It had been suggested by NASACRE that schools with Academy status, such as those in Slough, should be supported by the respective SACREs in the local area.

It was queried whether RE would be included in the English Baccalaureate. It was noted that RE had not been considered a central subject for inclusion, though schools could elect to choose RE as part of the qualification.

Resolved – That the verbal update be noted.

18. RE Teacher Weekend - Jo Fageant

The Committee noted the minutes of the RE Teacher Weekend held on 1-2 October 2011.

Resolved – That the report on the RE Teacher Weekend be noted.

19. Budget - verbal update

This item was not taken as there was no officer present from the Local Authority to confirm the budget position.

20. Development Plan - to include discussion on available underspend

This item was not taken as there was no officer present from the Local Authority to confirm how large an underspend remained. It was agreed that, one further information had been received from the Local Authority, an additional meeting would be arranged for further discussions about how remaining funds could be used by the SACRE.

It was noted by Members that the SACRE was receiving no direct support from the Local Authority. This was highlighted by members as an area of major concern and it was requested that the Chair write to the Local Authority expressing these concerns.

- Resolved** – a) That the Chair request further information about remaining funds in the SACRE budget and arrange a further meeting.
- b) That the Chair write to the Local Authority expressing the views of the SACRE and requesting that further support be given at future meetings.

21. Joint SACREs Conference 2012

Members were informed that there would be no Joint SACREs Conference in 2012, but there would be three launch days for the agreed syllabus which would serve as a training session for teachers in the Berkshire authorities.

Resolved – That the update on the Joint SACREs conference be noted.

22. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was proposed for Monday 28th May 2012. This was to 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 4.30 pm and closed at 5.33 pm)