

Minutes of the Meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education held on 6 November 2019 at 6.00 pm

Present:

Committee A: Mr P Anderson, Mrs S Lawson, Mrs M Shepherd, Mr J Hussein, Ms H Kaur Takhtar and Mr A Kariyawasam

Committee B: Rev.J Guest

Committee C: Ms J Culloty

Apologies: Tunde Ojetola, Sara Perlmutter, Ruth Gedalovitch and Councillors Martin Kerin and Gary Collins

In attendance: Deborah Weston, Associate Advisor for Religious Education
Andrea Winstone, Strategic Lead for School Effectiveness and SEND
Kenna-Victoria Healey, Senior Democratic Services Officer

9. Minutes

The meeting was declared inquorate and it was agreed that the meeting would continue informally and recommendations put to members at the next quorate meeting of SACRE, along with the minutes from the 9 January 2019.

10. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

11. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

12. Monitoring Provision for RE in Thurrock Schools

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education presented the report which advised Members in order to discharge its legal duties, SACRE monitors provision for Religious Education in its local area where RE is delivered in accordance with the local Agreed Syllabus.

It was enquired as to whether the Schools and Academies were breaking the Law, as they were not submitting the right information or checking what management systems were producing before submitting as part of the school workforce census. Members remarked that the report, was the same year on

year and that perhaps a different approach was required other than just analysing the figures produced by schools.

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education explained that schools were not breaking the Law, however Academies were and would be in breach of their contract with the Department for Education.

Members of SACRE discussed the figures in appendix 1 and commented that the only school on the list which was not an Academy was Grays Convent High School. The Chair of SACRE enquired if they were not escalating their concerns, was SACRE implementing its role appropriately.

It was commented that Ofsted were aware of the situation and it was a particularly hot topic this term. The Associate Adviser for Religious Education agreed with Members that it was frustrating not to be given the full information they required. She further commented that they could do something about it and the first stage would be write to the Academy Trust with their concerns.

The Associate Adviser suggested she could complete a web survey and report back at the January 2020 meeting. Members agreed they felt that would be useful and to see a more realistic breakdown.

It was remarked by the Chair of SACRE that he would like to see SACRE in a position where they could encourage schools to engage with Religious Education. He further stated he'd like to see the profile of SACRE raised and for more engagement with schools and the community.

Resolved that the Associate Adviser for Religious Education undertake a Web Survey, to obtain additional information on School Workforce Data and report back to the January meeting.

13. Update on National Developments and Opportunities

The report was introduced by the Associate Adviser for Religious Education, who explained the report detailed the key national developments that impacted on Religious Education. Members heard in the period since the last SACRE meeting, a number of developments had taken place such as the introduction of the new Ofsted Framework for Inspection.

During discussions Members commented on the list of focus points throughout the report of what a SACRE 'should do'. It was also picked up on the changes that Ofsted were now reporting their findings on Religious Education within schools.

Members went on to suggest they should look at particular areas that Ofsted were reporting on and then they would be in a better position to advice schools accordingly. It was further highlighted that within Catholic Schools Ofsted were not able to carry out a deep dive of how Religious Education was taught. The Associate Adviser commented, several inspection reports from Ofsted had mentioned RE in the section on Pupils' Personal Development.

The Chair of the SACRE remarked that when reading through the 'should do' of the report he was often left thinking Thurrock SACRE were doing these but what was next, how did SACRE support and engage with schools. He continued to state the Educational Awards were due to take place at the end of the month, yet there was no mention of SACRE or the work it did with schools.

It was suggested that the children who attended the Youth Conference, could do a short presentation to be shown at the Educational Awards in 2020 as a way of celebrating Religious Education by the people who it was intended for.

Resolved that SACRE:

- 1. Review the information collected (October 2019) within Appendix**
- 2. Evaluate the relevance of each section for RE in Thurrock**
- 3. Consider the suggested actions**

14. Work Plan 2019-2020 - Second Draft

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education addressed Members informing them following the discussion of the non-statutory guidance on RE and the review of the 2018-19 work plan at the last meeting, Officers had worked on a draft work plan for 2019-20.

Members discussed the proposed work plan and the list of objectives for SACRE based on the responsibilities for SACRE described in the non-statutory guidance.

Resolved that SACRE considered the adoption of the draft work plan for 2019-2020.

The meeting finished at 7.25 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**