

Minutes of the Meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education held on 18 April 2016 at 6.00 pm

Present:

Committee A: Mrs L Lawson, Free Church Christian Member, Mrs M Shepherd, Roman Catholic Member, Mr A Kariyawasam and Dr O Soley, Pentecostal Member

Committee B: Rev. J Guest and Rev. D Bates

Committee C: Ms A Jellicoe, Ms H Gillman and Mr P Griffiths

Committee D: Councillors Yash Gupta and Tunde Ojetola

Apologies: Mary Taylor and Councillor Kerin.

In Attendance: Roger Edwardson, Strategic Lead, School Improvement and Skills
Deborah Weston, Associate Adviser for Religious Education
Charlotte Raper, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Kenna-Victoria Martin, Senior Democratic Services Officer

18. Minutes

The Minutes from the previous meeting held on 2 December 2015 were approved as a correct record.

19. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

20. Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

21. A New Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017/2022

Members were asked to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference
It was agreed that the membership of the ASC would be identical to SACRE

Members were requested to agree the revised Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Thurrock and the launch of and training for the revised syllabus.

It was commented that following consultations there had been unanimous support from teachers as to the units of work guide included within the new proposed syllabus.

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education explained that Community Schools had to follow the agreed syllabus; Academies had the opportunity to either follow their own syllabus or that of the local authority. She confirmed that between 75/80% of Academies within Thurrock followed the local authority's agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

Once agreed by the Agreed Syllabus Conference, the syllabus was to be referred to the Council to formally be agreed and implemented. It was queried as to whether the Council could refuse the syllabus; Members were advised that their only reason to refuse the syllabus was if it did not meet legislation, which it did.

During discussions the following was agreed to be included within the front of the new agreed syllabus:

- **Joint forward by the Chair and Roger Edwardson, Strategic Lead, School Improvement and Skills;**
- **Continuity between the old/new syllabus & Religion in Thurrock: and**
- **12 how to steps on using the syllabus**

It was further commented that schools could choose which religions they wished to teach at Key Stage 1 along with Christianity. The Associate Adviser for Religious Education advised schools could add religions to teach, however they could not take any way.

The Chair proposed to agree to recommend the revised Agreed Syllabus for RE education in Thurrock and the vote was as follows:

For: *Committee A:* Mrs L Lawson, Free Church Christian Member, Mrs M Shepherd, Roman Catholic Member, Mr A Kariyawasam and Dr O Soley, Pentecostal Member

Committee B: Rev. J Guest and Rev. D Bates

Committee C: Ms A Jellicoe, Ms H Gillman and Mr P Griffiths

Committee D: Councillors Yash Gupta and Tunde Ojetola

Against: None

Abstained: None

Members further agreed the launch of and training for the revised syllabus. The Associate Adviser for Religious Education advised of two possible dates being:

- 10th June 2016 or
- 24th June 2016

RESOLVED:

1. **That SACRE Convened an Agreed Syllabus Conference**
2. **That the Agreed Syllabus Conference vote on the proposal to adopt the RE Today Model Syllabus**

22. Judicial Review R (Fox) v Secretary of State for Education [2015] EWHC 3404

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education introduced the report to Members, explaining a judicial review was held in the High Court of Justice following a challenge to the legality of the Department for Education's GCSE Subject Content for Religious Studies. In his judgment, Justice Warby upheld the claim that the following section of the content contained an error of law.

The judge found that the section of the content might mislead those responsible for the provision for RE in schools without a religious character into believing that irrespective of which specification they chose or route through that specification they would automatically be fulfilling their legal requirements in relation to Religious Education and that this was not necessarily true.

During discussions it was agreed that following the outcome of the review Schools with Thurrock should be written too.

RESOLVED:

That SACRE consider the report on this case and the Secretary of State's response in order to determine the implications for Religious Education in Thurrock.

23. Any Other Business

The Democratic Services Officer addressed Members informing them of the provisional dates for the year ahead:

- 22 June 2016
- 14 September 2016
- 14 December 2016
- 1 March 2017

During discussions Members enquired as to whether the June 2016 meeting could be moved to a date in July 2016. The Senior Democratic Services

Officer confirmed that she would seek to the possibility of changing the meeting dates.

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education asked that should any member wish to discuss a certain topic for them to contact Democratic Services, where a work programme could be created.

Before closing the meeting the Chair took the opportunity to thank Councillor Gupta for his work and for his contributions to SACRE.

The meeting finished at 6.50 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**