

Minutes of the Meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education held on 5 June 2019 at 6.00 pm

Present:

Committee A: Mrs S Lawson, Mr P Anderson, Mrs M Shepherd and Mr T Ojetola

Committee B: Rev.J Guest,

Committee D: Councillors Martin Kerin and Gary Collins

Apologies: Mr A Kariyawasam, Mrs R Gedalovitch and Ms J Culloty

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

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

1. 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.

Mr Ojetola enquired as to why there had not been a report following the news that parents had been withdrawing their children from RE in schools. It was explained that at the time the report was presented to Members, the Council was in 'Purdah' meaning that as yet officers were unable to present a report. However, Members were assured that they would be presented with a report in due course.

2. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chairs

Nominations were invited for the appointment of Chair for the Committee. It was proposed by Mr Ojetola and seconded by Councillor Kerin, that Rev. Guest be appointed as Chair of the Committee.

Nominations were invited for the appointment of Vice Chair of Committees A, B, C and D.

RESOLVED that:

That Rev. John Guest be appointed as Chair of Thurrock SACRE.

The following members be elected as Vice Chairs:

Committee A: Mr T Ojetola

Committee B: Rev. J Guest

Committee C: to be confirmed at the next meeting

Committee D: Councillor Collins

5. Collective Worship

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education remarked SACRE had a legal duty to monitor provision for collective worship in schools in its local area. Members were advised that schools struggled to set up collective worship and so it was pleasing to see the policies on the selected schools websites as this was no longer a legal requirement.

SACRE Members broke off into groups to each discuss the policies listed in the agenda at appendix 1.

Mr Ojetola left at 6.55pm

Discussions moved on to reading materials offered to schools, to enable them to carry out acts of collective worship. It was commented there was a group of volunteers called 'Open the Book', who visited schools putting on plays for primary school children from the bible and leading them in prayer.

RESOLVED that Members:

- 1. Considered a sample of policies from Thurrock schools to determine how Collective Worship is offered in local schools in the light of the legal requirements set out in section 3 below.**
- 2. Considered the policies of the 5 schools which are attached in Appendix 1.**

6. Monitoring Provision for RE in Thurrock Schools

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education introduced the item explaining she had met with the Director of the Hassenbrooke Trust. Following which it

had been made clear the school was open to discussions regarding Religious Education and teachers were committed to the subject.

During discussions it was mentioned that Questions 4 to 7 were seeking which syllabus was being used by the schools; all answered the Thurrock's Agreed Syllabus. It was highlighted that this outcome was not obvious however; this was the case when you looked closer at the answer to questions. Members further highlighted that most schools followed the scheme of work with most answering 'yes', one answering 'no' and one simply said 'something different' however didn't mention which scheme of work they were using. Overall Members were pleased with its completeness

Members noted that even the Academies who had responded were using the Agreed Syllabus. Members further commented that Warren Primary School replied they were following a different scheme at the current time. The Associate Adviser for Religious Education stated she was curious as to what scheme the school would be following. She hinted that it would be the discovery scheme.

Members heard that out of 52 schools only 7 had responded, it was queried as to how the schools could be encouraged into responding. It was decided that individual emails would be sent to school in an aid to encourage them to reply. The Strategic Lead for School Effectiveness and SEND offered to include the questionnaire in the schools bulletin, to assist with encouraging the schools to complete and send back their questionnaires.

RESOLVED that Members:

- 1. Considered the information collected to date (May 2019) (Appendix 1)**
- 2. Noted any lessons learned from these responses**
- 3. Considered what action might be necessary to collect more responses**

7. Work Plan 2019-2020

Members sought as to when the Agreed Syllabus was last reviewed and submitted. It was confirmed by the Associate Adviser for Religious Education that the last update was completed in 2016 and the Syllabus was not due for renewal until 2021.

Members reviewed the role and responsibilities of a SACRE listed within the report which included Must Dos, Should Dos, and Might Dos of SACRE. During discussions, it was deemed that Thurrock SACRE met all of the Must Dos. It was suggested that if it was felt necessary then a mid-term review could be undertake of the Agreed Syllabus. It was remarked that most schools followed the Agreed Syllabus, with the Academies adopting to follow it, even though they did not have to. Members stated they felt the Agreed Syllabus was very good.

It was queried as to points 2 and 4 on the 'should' section, concerning how much SACRE were working with the Local Authority. It was mentioned by the Associate Adviser for Religious Education, that perhaps the Local Authority could be made more aware that part of her contract meant they could contact her; if they need to or should they need advice or have any issues. It was sought as to if SACRE could receive a report summarising any contact had with the Local Authority or schools and whether SACRE were proactive enough in offering advice and support.

Members then discussed the work programme for the new municipal year and stated in addition to the reports mentioned in appendix 2 they wished to see the following reports:

- Children being withdrawn from RE
- SACRE and the LA working together
- Good practise of SACRE
- Advice given to schools and the LA

RESOLVED that Members:

- 1. Considered the Non-Statutory Guidance (Appendix 1) and the workplan from 2018-2019**
- 2. Developed a workplan for 2019-2020**

8. Any Other Business

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education addressed Members notifying them the Conference for 2019 had taken place, with Schools they were not expecting just turning up to take part, which was very pleasing to see.

She firstly gave her thanks to Sue Lakin and Michelle Dove, for all of their help in telephoning every School in the Borough to enquire if they would be attending the Conference.

It was highlighted that the year 8 children only had a short briefing of the activities they would be leading on and they lead the activities brilliantly while offering support to the year 5 children if they needed it.

The meeting finished at 7.35 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**