

Minutes of the Meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education held on 2 December 2015 at 6.00 pm

Present:

- Committee A:** Mrs M Shepherd, Roman Catholic Member
- Committee B:** Rev. J Guest
- Committee C:** Ms H Gilman (Left at 7.48pm)
- Committee D:** Councillors Yash Gupta and Tunde Ojetola (Arrived at 6.30pm)

Apologies: Mrs S Lawson Mr P Anderson, Mr D Bates, Mr P Griffiths, Ms A Jellicoe, Ms N Fawell and Councillor Kerin.

In Attendance:

Roger Edwardson, Strategic Lead, School Improvement and Skills
Fiona Moss , RE Today
Deborah Weston, Associate Adviser for Religious Education
Kenna-Victoria Martin, Senior Democratic Services Officer

13. Minutes

The Minutes from the previous meeting held on 14 October 2015 were approved as a correct record.

14. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

15. Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

16. Thurrock SACRE - Reviewing the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Thurrock

The Chair of Council welcomed Fiona Moss from RE Today to the meeting; he continued by informing those present that he had heard on the Sunday Programme a discussion on the need to change the name of 'Religious Education'.

Associate Adviser for Religious Education advised Members that the item followed from the spring meeting; where they discussed the agreed syllabus and the options of updating it. Members were informed that they had potentially three options, to amend the current Thurrock agreed syllabus, to adopt another authority or to readopt the syllabus.

Ms Moss addressed the Council explaining that the last local agreed syllabus was in 2011 in Bedfordshire. She continued to inform members that there was now the model syllabus which was written by the advisers at RE today and included units of work for teachers to help them with teaching Religious Education.

Members were informed that they would be taken through two new syllabuses the modal syllabus and the Havering and Redbridge syllabus which were written by D. Weston.

The Council were advised that the model syllabus had been written to allow local authorities to adopt it and tweak it to suit what they would like to be taught within each local school. Members were further advised that the syllabus provided units of work, which assisted teachers when writing their teaching plans.

It commented that both syllabuses contained 'the purpose of RE' and Members discussed the importance of including aims within a syllabus, it was confirmed that within the Thurrock Syllabus aims were included and Members stated they wish for them to stay.

The topic of non-religious views was raised during which it was commented that schools teach World Views at GCSE level rather than religious views. The Chair of the Council enquired if Ms Moss came across people within her work with RE Today who were not religious, however believed in God. Ms Moss confirmed that she did, but she would say they were spiritualists.

During the discussion Members sought as to how many people actually understood what the word religion meant. It was stated that 25% of the population understood what religion was and 17% of people were non-religious however believed in God.

Ms Moss informed Members that both the model syllabus and the Havering and Redbridge syllabus had a 12 step guide for teachers teaching RE on how to use and implement the syllabus of their choice; both also included legislation and rulings for guidance.

The Strategic Lead, School Improvement and Skills stated that Thurrock had 52 schools which were a mixture of Local Authority schools and Academies. He continued that of the schools in borough 15 were maintained schools and of the 15, 3 were Catholic and 5 were Church of England; it was asked for clarification as to who had to follow the Local Authorises syllabus and who would have to write their own.

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education advised that the Local Authority had a statutory duty to provide a RE Syllabus for all 15 Maintained schools apart from the Catholic schools as they followed a separate syllabus. Members were further advised the 80% of the schools in the borough followed the Local Authorises RE syllabus.

Councillor Ojetola enquired as to whether the Academies in Thurrock had been encouraged to buy into the agreed syllabus. Members of SACRE were informed that as yet the academies had not been contacted regarding the syllabus; however they could be subject to a service agreement.

Ms Moss referred back to the model syllabus explaining that at KS1 children were to be taught Christianity and one religion within their local area. By the end of Primary School teachers are expected to have taught a minimum of 6 different religions.

Members were informed that teachers were given guidance throughout each syllabus with steps to assist with planning classes, it was commented that in April 2016 units of work were to be introduced to further help teachers of Religious Education if it was required.

Mrs Shepherd stated that teachers are grateful and appreciative for all information and guidance offered to them.

Ms Gilman welcomed any help and support offered to teachers teaching Religious Education. She continued by commenting anything which helped to improve the subject and the delivery of the subject would be worth it.

Ms Moss summed up by apprising Members of the end of key stage outcomes:

- End of Key Stage 1, children should be able to know and explain the key beliefs of more than one religious group;
- End of key Stage 3, children should know in depth Christianity and its way of living.

Councillor Gupta commented that children needed a greater understanding of different religions and the similarity of religions. He stated that classes of Religious Education should inspire young people.

The Chair thanked Ms Moss for her work and for attending the meeting to explain the model syllabus to the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education.

17. Any Other Business

There was no other business discussed; however the Chair of SACRE asked for clarification of the next meeting date. The Clerk confirmed the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 17 February 2016.

The meeting finished at 8.00pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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