

NOTES of the inquorate meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) held on 3 July 2013 at 6.00pm

Present:

Committee A	Mrs Lawson
Committee B	None
Committee C	Mr Misra, Ms Jellicoe
Committee D	Councillor Ojetola

Apologies: Councillor Anderson and Mr Tweedle

In attendance: D Weston, RE Consultant (Advisor to SACRE)
K-V Martin, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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.

It was agreed that as Items 7 to 9 had been discussed at the previous meeting, that SACRE would begin their discussion at Item 10.

1. National Religious Education Review

The RE Consultant presented a report which explained that in summer 2012, the RE Council commenced a review of Religious Education in England to run parallel to the government's review of the National Curriculum.

Those present were informed that phase one of the review took place between May and December 2012. The RE Council's Curriculum, Qualifications and Assessment Committee was enlarged so that it could act as the project's Steering Group, where expert panel members were recruited. Following this they went out to public consultation and produced a report to give a basis for the next phase of the Review.

The RE Consultant notified members that phase two of the Review had started in January 2013 with the appointment of two Task Groups. Members were informed that the review was still in draft format and may have changed after the consultation.

Following discussions it was suggested that under Key Stage 1 the first sentence should read *"Pupils should develop their knowledge and understanding about Christianity, at least one other religion or non-religious worldview, recognising their local, national and global contexts."* Those present also suggested that under Key Stage 2 the following

should read *“Pupils should extend their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and at least two other religions, and non-religious worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts”*

2. Report on the Inquiry into the Supply of and Support of Teachers of RE in England

The RE consultant informed SACRE that the report, “RE, the truth unmasked” was the result of an inquiry carried out by the All Party Parliamentary Group on RE to investigate the supply and support for teachers of Religious Education.

SACRE were informed that the report drew on over 400 sources of evidence and concluded that there are some serious issues which need to be addressed, if schools were to provide high quality Religious Education for young people.

The RE consultant talked through the report which was included as an appendix (page 57 of the agenda) and the following main findings were discussed:

- a) In over half of the 300 primary schools participating in this inquiry, some or all pupils were taught RE by someone other than their class teacher. In a quarter of these schools RE was taught by teaching assistants. This is unacceptable and in many cases this has a detrimental impact on the quality of RE.
- b) About a half of primary teachers and trainee teachers lack confidence in teaching RE.
- c) Over 50% of teachers of RE in secondary schools have no qualification or appropriate expertise in the subject. This is unacceptable.

3. Review of the Thurrock Agreed Syllabus 2009

The RE Consultant informed those present that all Local Authorities are required to establish and support an occasional body called an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC).

It was explained that an ASC must produce and recommend to the Local Authority an agreed syllabus for RE which is educationally sound and meets legal requirements.

The RE Consultant further informed Members of SACRE that under Schedule 31 to the Education Act 1996 the locally agreed syllabus was a statutory syllabus of RE and it must be followed in maintained schools. SACRE queried as to whether Academies had to follow the same agreed syllabus and as this was something the Local Authority had to pay for, would Academies have to pay towards the syllabus also. The RE Consultant explained that Academies could use the same syllabus as the Local Authority; however they may have to contribute to the funding. That was yet to be decided.

SACRE Members were notified that once the agreed syllabus had been adopted by the Local Authority, the syllabus would set out what pupils should be taught and could include the expected standards of pupils' performance at different stages.

SACRE members present raised their concerns that this was the second inquorate meeting of the Committee.

The meeting finished at 7.15pm.