

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

4 November 2020 – At a meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education and West Sussex Agreed Syllabus Conference held at 10.30 am at a virtual meeting with restricted public access.

Present:

Committee A

Mrs Bell – Jewish
Mr Firoozmand – Baha'i
Ms Hock – Quaker

Committee B

Mrs Black – Church of England
Mr Simpson – Church of England
Mrs Smith (Vice-Chairman) – Church of England

Committee C

Miss Barker – Teacher Representative
Mr Cornford – NASUWT, the Teacher's Union
Mrs Macrae – Teacher Representative
Rev Millwood – Teacher Representative

Committee D

Mr Burrett (Chairman) – Local Education Authority
Mrs Burgess – Local Education Authority
Ms Lord – Local Education Authority
Mrs Pendleton – Local Education Authority

Apologies for Absence: Mrs Edwards (Baptist Union) and Major Warner (Salvation Army)(Committee A); Rev Higgins (Church of England) (Committee B); Mrs Mullet (Teacher Representative) (Committee C); Mrs Jones, Mr Quinn and Mr Simmons (Local Education Authority) (Committee D) and Mrs Waker (co-opted member).

Absent: Rev Carn (Methodist), Mrs Feist (Roman Catholic) Mr Syed (Muslim) (Committee A), Mrs Llewelyn (Teacher Representative) (Committee C) and Dr Smith (co-opted member).

85. Chairman's Welcome and Introductions

85.1 The Chairman thanked Karen Hammond, the Agreed Syllabus Working Group and officers from the Department of Education and Skills who had all worked hard to produce the draft syllabus.

86. West Sussex Agreed Syllabus Conference

86.1 The draft Agreed Syllabus was introduced by Karen Hammond (Consultant) who thanked everyone who had worked hard on the syllabus during very challenging times and advised: -

- Consultation had taken place with a number of primary and secondary head teachers
- The new syllabus was more user friendly with links to resources that would be especially helpful to non-specialist teachers
- The re-write was light touch and incorporated themes to recognise the diversity of beliefs and the recognition of religion and world views
- The syllabus is to be launched in January 2021
- Well planned training on the syllabus needed to be arranged
- It was hoped that cluster groups would form strong RE networks

86.2 Summary of responses to the Agreed Syllabus Conference's comments and questions: -

- There was concern that the new syllabus would be launched at a time when schools were very busy and might get overlooked
- Guidance on teaching Christianity and two other principal religions should be covered in training
- The syllabus should not be so prescriptive that it did not allow schools' teaching to reflect their local communities
- Teacher training was crucial and would provide feedback for the continued development of the syllabus as would cluster groups
- There was no requirement for different religious denominations to be taught in RE – this could be covered in teacher training
- SACRE members would have a chance to comment on the final editing version of the syllabus before it was published

86.3 A vote was taken for each of the four committees that comprised the West Sussex Agreed Syllabus Conference, each of which supported the adoption of the draft syllabus.

86.4 The West Sussex Agreed Syllabus Conference thanked everyone involved in developing the syllabus for their hard work and highlighted that training and resources were key for teachers to be able to deliver it.

86.5 Resolved – that the West Sussex Agreed Syllabus Conference agrees that the draft syllabus should be adopted and implemented from January 2021. Post meeting note: Due to the ongoing pandemic, the Agreed Syllabus was launched to a revised timescale in April 2021.

86.6 The Agreed Syllabus Conference then closed, and the meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education began at 11.40 a.m.

87. Members' Interests

87.1 No interests were declared.

88. Minutes

88.1 Angela Smith requested that recommendation 5 under minute 82.4 be changed to read 'That Miss Barker and Mrs Smith be asked to establish a network of RE teachers to support teachers.' This was agreed.

88.2 Resolved – that, with the amendment to recommendation 5 under minute 82.4, the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2020 be agreed as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

89. Response from the Director of Education and Skills

89.1 SACRE members discussed the response from the Director of Education and Skills and felt that SACRE needed a specific budget allocation and more resources.

89.2 Resolved – that SACRE wishes to discuss the results of research by the Department of Education and Skills into the resourcing of other SACREs at its next meeting.

90. Dates of Future Meetings

90.1 SACRE noted that its next meeting was scheduled to take place at 10.30am on 1 March 2021.

The meeting ended at 12.05 pm

Chairman