
(SACRE) STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 November 2010

Present:

Members of the Council

Councillors Daunt (Chair) and Parnell

Independent Members

Bridget Goom, Mrs Gail Ratcliffe, Peter Howard, Tony Blackshaw, Jackie Meering, David Parrott, Julian Bryant, Ruth Evans, Ellen Humphries and Sian Roberts

Apologies

David Vane, Rev David Sillence, Mrs Margaret Blake, Major Ruth Hill, Jeff Lynn, Priti Dave, Councillor Peter Marsh-Jenks and Andy Mills

Also in attendance:

Kate Martin – substitute for Group D
Sue Langdon – Secondary Phase Inspector

1. **WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND CHANGES OF MEMBERSHIP**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and thanked them for coming.

Apologies were received from:-

Group A

Margaret Blake	The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches
Priti Dave	Hindu
Jeff Lynn	Baha'i
Rev Andy Mills	The Baptists
Rev David Sillence	The Roman Catholic Church
David Vane	Buddhist

Group D

Councillor Marsh-Jenks

2. **STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIR**

The Chair outlined that whilst members were encouraged to look at and consider the Agreed Syllabus, at this stage, the document would not be rewritten as there had been no major changes. He explained that there would be time for members to share comments during the meeting.

3. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

4. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2010 be approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Item 15 – Update from the Secondary Phase Inspector – the Secondary Phase Inspector gave a verbal update on the possible use of RE network panels to deliver training which would be dependant on the current re-structure and White Paper.

(Copy of the minutes circulated with the agenda and appended to the signed minutes).

5. **AGREED SYLLABUS**

i) Presentation of the newly revised draft Agreed Syllabus

The Secondary Phase Inspector introduced the Agreed Syllabus. The Group heard that during the last review of the Agreed Syllabus five years previously, the “Living Difference” had been fully rewritten. National Strategies had changed the emphasis from what children learn to how children learn and develop ideas and thought processes. The Group heard that the theme of enquiry based learning had prevailed in this version of the draft Agreed Syllabus.

The Secondary Phase Inspector issued the Group with an A3 handout. The criteria for meeting very good and excellent standards were explained in relation to the way in which pupils learn.

The representative of Teachers’ Subject Network and Advanced Skills Teacher (RE) drew attention to page 25 of the Agreed Syllabus and gave examples of the methodology for teaching and learning:-

- ***Example 1: good/evil (Type A); and***
- ***Example 2: Sikh religion (Type B/C).***

ii) Feedback from each Group

The Group had a question and answer session during which:-

- the notion of “concept” was discussed and clarified in context as an ‘idea’ or ‘journey’ towards a child’s own view (maturation);
- questions regarding children with non-religious backgrounds wanting (or not) to participate in role-play activities were addressed. It was noted that these issues rarely arose, but that views of individual children needed to be respected and taken into consideration where necessary;
- the Secondary Phase Inspector praised the Agreed Syllabus for its ability to assist children’s development of transferable skills through classroom activities. For example, hot seating and taking on the roles of different characters helped to develop children’s skills and were applicable across subjects; and

- a question was raised regarding the number of children who wanted to opt out of RE completely. A discussion followed, noting that cases of this were minimal and that children were encouraged to take part without being judged on their views. Moments of reflection, religious or non-religious, were considered important for all children, regardless of religious upbringing.

The Group were issued with a handout from the Ofsted document, 'Transforming religious education' and notified of the guidance relating to agreed syllabuses – page 7. Particular sections of the Agreed Syllabus were brought to the Group's attention, especially areas which had been amended, for example, 'Promoting Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning' (SEAL) – page 73.

Another question was put forward, asking:-

- what sort of questions students were examined on if the emphasis had changed from *what* children learn to *how* children learn. It was explained that at one school, the exam was based on four knowledge questions and one larger-weighted question requiring children's knowledge and views. It was made clear that schools chose their exam boards, within which there was variation.

The Chair asked for any other queries or points of interest relating to the Agreed Syllabus. A brief discussion took place regarding wording on the contents page in 'Section 5, List of Concepts, C Concepts'. The Group acknowledged that the title 'Examples of concepts that are particular to specific religions' had Humanism listed as a sub-heading. Whilst Humanism was *not* considered to be a religion, 'Section 5, List of Concepts, C Concepts' itself (page 153) *did* make the distinction between 'specific major religions' and 'Baha'i and Humanism'. Whilst it may have been preferable to amend the contents page to reflect this, there was a consensus amongst members that, at this stage in the process, it would be reasonable to leave the contents page unchanged.

The Chair expressed his thanks once again to the Secondary Phase Inspector and the representative of Teachers' Subject Network and Advanced Skills Teacher (RE), before concluding and asking for the Group to consider whether they would accept and ratify the Agreed Syllabus.

During the votes, a member of Group B expressed the desire for the Group to have been formerly invited to taken part in the Agreed Syllabus Conferences and requested that this be noted for the future.

iii) Ratification

UPON BEING PUT TO THE VOTE, THE RECOMMENDATION THAT THE AGREED SYLLABUS FOR HAMPSHIRE, PORTSMOUTH AND SOUTHAMPTON JANUARY 2011 WAS CARRIED. RECORDED VOTE:

GROUP A: FOR

GROUP B: FOR

GROUP C: FOR

GROUP D: FOR

RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Agreed Syllabus for Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton January 2011 be approved; and
- (ii) that the Agreed Syllabus be reviewed within the next five years.

6. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

ACTION

Enhancing Religious Education in Southampton

The representative of Teachers' Subject Network and Advanced Skills Teacher (RE) noted that at the last RE network meeting, a discussion took place around Primary and Secondary school teachers wanting to develop links with members of different faith groups across the city. It was outlined that SACRE members and members of Southampton Council of Faiths (SCOF) had been approached in relation to this.

RESOLVED that any SACRE member willing to put forward their details to be added to the list of faith groups being compiled was to fill out the form attached (Agenda Item 6) and return it to the SACRE clerk.

ALL