

24 NOVEMBER 2009

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR MRS C A TALBOT (CHAIRMAN)

Representatives of Christian and other Denominations which, in the opinion of the Authority, appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area:

Mr B Ahmed (Islamic Association of Lincoln)
Mrs C Dring (Baptist Church)
Reverend E McDonald (United Reformed Church)
Mr N McFarlane (Salvation Army)
Mr F Sperring (Society of Friends)
Mrs S Screenivasan (Hindu Community)

The Church of England

Mrs A Parry-Jones
Ms C Wright

Such Associations representing teachers, which, in the opinion of the Authority, ought to be represented:

Mrs J Austin (National Association of Head Teachers)
Miss C E Turner (Primary Schools)

Lincolnshire County Council

Councillor Mrs C M H Farquharson

Officers

Ms W Harrison - Religious Education Adviser
Mrs D Barnes - Assistant Director of Children's Services
Mrs P Bissell - Diocesan Schools Religious Education Adviser
Mr M Plater - Adviser

Councillor the Reverend S Cliff also attended

Mrs P Bissell opened the proceedings with a reflection.

21. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs C A Williamson (Secondary Schools) and Professor B Winston (Lincolnshire Jewish Community).

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs C A Talbot declared a personal interest in agenda item 9 as she is a trustee of the Priory Federation of Academies (minute 31 refers).

23. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE

The Chairman reported that she had received letters from Sue Milton, Chairman of Governors at Welbourn Church of England Primary School, and from the Head Teacher at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Horncastle in response to letters congratulating those schools on their good results.

The Chairman reported that in the next few months she would meet Debbie Barnes and Wendy Harrison to look at how to disseminate good practice around the county and help schools that wanted to improve.

The Chairman reported that she had spoken to Stephen Griffiths of the Lincolnshire branch of the Council of Christians and Jews and that had resulted in a note about SACRE appearing in their newsletter. This was one way of making SACRE more widely known. The Chairman also reported that copies of the SACRE Annual Report had now been sent to all schools and to other recipients.

The Chairman referred to the imminent retirement of Pauline Bissell as Diocesan Schools Religious Education Adviser and informed Mrs Bissell that the members of SACRE had collaborated to buy her a pampering session at Eden Pool. Mrs Bissell thanked members for their gift and said how much she had enjoyed her work over the years.

24. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 July 2009 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to apologies from Mrs C Dring (Baptist Church) being added to minute 4 and to minute 9 being changed by deleting the word "enter" in line 3 and inserting the words "intervene in" in place thereof.

25. APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDING (Minute 7, SACRE, 20 July 2009)

It was reported that Councillor P A Robinson had agreed to provide £5,000 from funds under his control following the unsuccessful bid for funds from other sources. The money would be used for a team of teachers to develop

resources for Nursery Schools, Early Years and Key Stage 1. The team was overseen by the Council's Religious Education Adviser.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report be noted
- (2) That the co-ordinator attend a future meeting to report on the Project.

26. OTHER EVENTS (Minute 11, SACRE, 20 July 2009)

It was reported that there had been no shortfall on the Special Religious Education Day held at St Christopher's School on 9 October. In previous years SACRE had funded any shortfall. This annual event would be continued by the teachers at St Christopher's after the Diocesan Schools Religious Education Adviser retired.

The proposed Secondary Conference on 6 November 2009, following the "Lighting the Candle" event, had been postponed to 4 December 2009.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

27. MEMBERSHIP OF SACRE

It was reported that Lincolnshire County Council had appointed Councillor P A Robinson to Group D of the membership of SACRE. Councillor Robinson had sent his apologies for this meeting.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Sara Cliff who was a Methodist Minister as well as a member of Lincolnshire County Council. There was a vacancy on SACRE for a representative of the Methodist Church and it was understood that a lay member of the Church would be nominated for appointment. Councillor Cliff was attending this meeting as an observer.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

28. SUMMARY OF OFSTED INSPECTIONS OF LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS WITH REFERENCE TO PUPILS'S SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Standing Advisory Council considered a report by Ms W Harrison which summarised the positive features and areas for development in those schools inspected by OFSTED between 3 June and 18 September 2009.

In the course of discussion it was noted that this aspect of education no longer received specific attention in OFSTED inspections. There was now no separate paragraph in the reports for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and those areas should be commented on in the "Personal Development and Well-being" section.

As requested at the previous meeting of SACRE, the summaries included the score and comments relating to community cohesion. Some of the inspections by OFSTED had been in the old style framework and some in the new style.

Reference was made to the importance of people from faith communities going into schools and helping schools to understand the value of religious education as a part of community cohesion. One quick way to increase awareness of other faiths was for schools to recognise the significant festival dates in the calendars of all faiths. Some schools were using the internet to make links with schools that could help them.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

29. SUMMARY OF SECTION 48 INSPECTIONS IN LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS

Paulette Bissell presented a report by David Clements that summarised the positive features and areas for development in those Church of England schools where an inspection under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 had been carried out in the autumn term 2009. Generally the grades in Section 48 inspections were higher than those given by OFSTED.

This was due in part to the fact that the areas of focus in the two inspections were very different. OFSTED inspections now focused very much on Leadership, management, teaching, learning and particularly standards of attainment whilst Section 48 inspections looked at how distinctive and effective the school was as a Church school.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

30. SUMMARY OF MONITORING VISITS TO LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS FOLLOWING OFSTED INSPECTIONS, WITH REFERENCE TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND ACTS OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The Religious Education Adviser presented a report summarising the positive features and areas for development in schools monitored since the last meeting on 24 July 2009. On this occasion the report was based on reports to three primary schools. A further ten visits would be made during the rest of the term.

The Diocesan Schools Religious Education Adviser reported that the monitoring visits were followed up by mid-period visits carried out by a head teacher and these tended to be quite confidential.

In general it was felt that schools welcomed these monitoring visits. They were not inspections and were an opportunity to support religious education. Many schools visited had good relations with the local parish church. Visits to places of worship other than churches were rare though there seemed to be an increase in the numbers of visitors to schools.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

31. NEW OFSTED FRAMEWORK – UPDATE

A copy of the new report template being used by OFSTED for school inspections had been circulated with the agenda for this meeting for the information of members. The sample circulated was a blank form, and it was hoped that for the next meeting it may be possible to show an example of a completed form. Use of this form had started in September 2009.

The layout of the form included provision for a pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural (SMSC) development to be graded from 1 (outstanding) to 4 (inadequate) but reports using the new framework tended not to include any comment on this aspect of education. Community cohesion would also be graded and was included in the section on leadership and management.

It was possible that using this new framework could mean that SMSC and community cohesion would receive grades but no comments. This could be monitored as reports were received, and reviewed after the first year of operation.

Religious education would come under the section on "Provision" which included the extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs. There was no specific reference on the form to acts of collective worship. Religious education and acts of collective worship were statutory requirements and SACRE should review the effectiveness of the new framework in this context. An understanding of other faiths was an essential element of religious education.

RESOLVED

That SACRE review at a later date the effectiveness of reports in the new format as a tool for monitoring religious education.

32. ACADEMIES (Minute 9, SACRE, 20 July 2009)

Academies were all-ability state schools established and managed by sponsors. The Trent Academy was being established in Gainsborough and a Federation of three Academies was being formed in Lincoln. Three others were being developed or proposed in Sleaford, Skegness and elsewhere. A quarter of all the County Councils Secondary Schools could become Academies, and the County Council would have no power to intervene in them. Despite that the County Council would still have a statutory duty in relation to all pupils.

Members were concerned at the lack of powers to influence religious education in Academies. SACRE had a responsibility to produce a standard curriculum but Academies need not use it. Members considered what action might be taken at this time in relation to religious education in Academies.

It was suggested that one way for religious education to have a higher profile in Academies would be for individual Churches to be part of sponsorship groups and so be represented on the Board of Governors of Academies. SACRE would not be directly involved in that.

It was suggested that SACRE could seek to have a meeting with each Academy, to ask how they saw religious education fitting into their curriculum and to offer help in achieving the Academies role in relation to the community. Such a meeting might involve the whole SACRE or just a few members, and it might be with just the Head Teacher and Chairman of Governors of each Academy. They should be at times when pupils were not on site. Advice should be sought from the Executive Director before approaching any Academy.

RESOLVED

- (1) That advice be sought from the Executive Director (Children's Group) on the best way to approach Academies in relation to the provision of religious education in Academies.
- (2) That the possibility of individual churches being involved as sponsors of Academies be noted.

33. SACRE WEBSITE - REPORT FROM WORKING PARTY (Minute 15, SACRE, 20 July 2009)

The Working Group had given some attention to the content of the website and it would shortly go live. It was not possible to view the website at this meeting.

RESOLVED

That members of SACRE be encouraged to view the website

34. REVIEW OF AGREED SYLLABUS

The agreed syllabus had been revised in 2006 and it should be reviewed every five years. The last review had started in 2004 and had been a major exercise. A new review may not need to be so substantial

The first stage could be to consult schools and ask whether they thought a major revision was necessary or just smaller changes. Academies should also be asked for their views. A questionnaire and letter could be based on that used in 2004.

When SACRE had an idea of the likely size of the task it could decide whether it would be necessary to involve an outside consultant. If one was needed, then he or she should be booked soon.

RESOLVED

- (1) That early next term a questionnaire be sent to the Head Teacher and Co-ordinator of Religious Education in all schools and Academies to ask for their constructive comments as to what changes might be needed to the agreed syllabus.
- (2) That the closing date for responses to the above questionnaire be mid-summer 2010.
- (3) That the questionnaire and covering letter be drafted by the Religious Education Adviser in consultation with the Chairman and the Assistant Director of Children's Services.

35. MARCH 2010 SACRE CONFERENCE (Minute 10, SACRE, 20 July 2009)

This Conference would be held on Tuesday 2 March 2010 at Bishop Grossteste University College as previously reported. Pauline Bissell would retire in December and the administration of the Conference after that would be handled by the Diocesan Education Centre with the help of David Clements and Wendy Harrison. Most of the programme was agreed and some workshops were being firmed up.

All members of SACRE could attend at no cost. The Chairman of SACRE would welcome delegates at the start of the Conference. Some publicity for the Conference had already started and the main mailing would be after Christmas.

RESOLVED

- That the report be noted.

36. SACRE ACTION PLAN

The Religious Education Adviser reported that the Action Plan had been reviewed. It was proposed to add new items, shown in red on the copy circulated with the agenda for this meeting, and to transfer long standing items, marked in blue, to an Archive Version of the Action Plan.

RESOLVED

That the status of the current Action Plan and the Archive version be approved.

37. SACRE 2008/09 ANNUAL REPORT

The Religious Education Adviser reported that she had started to prepare the SACRE Annual Report for 2008/09, and a draft could be presented to the meeting in March 2010.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

38. NATIONAL RESILIENCE PROJECT

The Religious Education Adviser reported that she had been appointed to another part-time position from July 2009 as Project Officer for a National Resilience Project. That project was to link Community Cohesion with the Government's Violent Extremism agenda and provide training for teachers in controversial issues. This would be in addition to her present part-time position. There was an Advisory Group of 45 people including people from different faith groups, religious education teachers and civil servants.

The project would hit 700 schools in September 2010. Some Lincolnshire schools were already involved. The project and her appointment would last until March 2011.

RESOLVED

That the Religious Education Adviser be congratulated on this appointment.

39. PRAYERS AT THE NEXT MEETING OF SACRE

It was agreed that Mrs C Dring would say prayers at the next meeting of SACRE.

40. VISIT OF ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

It was reported that the Archbishop of Canterbury would be visiting Lincoln for a few days in March 2010.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

91124SACRE