

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR MRS C A TALBOT (CHAIRMAN)

Lincolnshire Council of Churches (Group A)

Mr B Ahmed MBE (Islamic Association of Lincoln)
Mrs C Dring (Baptist Church)
Mr N McFarlane (Salvation Army)
Mr F Sperring (Society of Friends)

The Church of England (Group B)

Mrs A Parry-Jones
Mr D Clements

The Teachers Panel (Group C):

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

Lincolnshire County Council (Group D)

Councillors Mrs C M H Farquharson, P A Robinson and Mrs C A Talbot

Officers

Ms W Harrison - Religious Education Adviser
Mrs D Barnes - Assistant Director of Children's Services
Mr M Plater – Adviser
Mr P Thompson – Diocese of Lincoln
Miss R Wilson – Democratic Services Officer, Lincolnshire County Council

Apologies for absence:- Professor B Winston (Lincolnshire Jewish Community), Mr A Hornsby (Methodist Church), Rev E McDonald (United Reform Church), Mrs S Sreenivasan (Hindu Community), Ms C Wright (Church of England) and Mrs C A Williamson (Secondary schools).

Prayers were led by Mrs A Parry-Jones.

Prior to the start of the formal business of the meeting, the Chairman suggested that the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, which traditionally took place at this point in the calendar of meetings, be deferred to the November meeting, as it had not been included as an item on the agenda.

RESOLVED

That the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Lincolnshire SACRE be deferred until the next scheduled meeting in November 2010.

58. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE

The Chairman reported that Mrs C Wright had had an accident in which she had broken her neck, and with the approval of SACRE, the Chairman would write to her on behalf of the Committee to wish her a speedy recovery.

The Chairman congratulated Mr Bashir Ahmed on being awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours for services to the community.

The Chairman reported that a response had been received from the Reverend Canon Anthony Ball on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury, thanking Lincolnshire SACRE for a copy of their Annual Report for the previous year. He sent his best wishes to the Committee and commented that he was pleased to have been able to read their report.

A response had been received from Baston Church of England School, who expressed their feelings of great honour at being used as an example of good practice.

59. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 MARCH 2010

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 9 March 2010, be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to:

- (1) Miss C E Turner being deleted from the list of apologies as she was present.
- (2) Miss C A Williamson being added to the list of apologies as these had been submitted

60. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE (Minute 41, SACRE, 9 March 2010)

The Chairman reported that she had attended the "Reading the Signs" seminar at Beth Shalom on 17 March 2010 and it had been a very interesting day with a lot of controversial topics discussed. Another topic for discussion on the day was asking how everyone could work together in order to strengthen community relationships. The Chairman recommended that Members should visit the Holocaust Centre if they got the opportunity

61. SUMMARY OF MONITORING VISITS TO LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS FOLLOWING OFSTED INSPECTIONS, WITH REFERENCE TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND ACTS OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP (Minute 50, SACRE, 9 March 2010)

The RE Advisor reported that she had looked into the query about Paganism forming part of the school curriculum, and it was determined that this covered a broad range of beliefs and practices, however, there was no direct guidance about whether it should be included, and it was left to the individual schools to make the decision about whether to include it. The RE Advisor informed the committee that she would keep her eye on the situation, and report back should there be any further developments.

62. DRAFT OF ANNUAL SACRE REPORT 2008/09 (Minute 55, SACRE, 9 March 2010)

It was confirmed that the Draft Annual SACRE Report 2008/09, was sent out to Councillors and schools and secondary schools had found the examination data particularly useful. The Chairman queried whether members of SACRE had received it yet. The Chairman requested that any members who had not yet received a copy of this report should notify Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services), at the end of the meeting who would arrange for one to be sent out to them.

It was reported the report had been sent out to schools and that they had been very appreciative of this document, as they found it helpful to have the breakdown of national exam results.

The Diocesan Advisor requested a PDF version of the Annual report to publish onto the website. The RE Adviser would arrange this.

63. SACRE WEBSITE (Minute 52, SACRE, 9 March 2010)

The Diocesan Advisor reported that he had not yet received contact details for all Members for the website. The Chairman reminded the Committee to send these details through as soon as possible.

It was commented, on a related matter, that the annual reports from SACRE's were now listed on the NASACRE website. However, Lincolnshire SACRE was not one of those listed. The RE Adviser and the Assistant Director Children's Services agreed to look into this further, as the Lincolnshire SACRE had sent through copies of their annual reports.

64. UPDATE FROM NASACRE/QCDA CONFERENCE HELD ON 24 MARCH 2010

Consideration was given to a report prepared by Mr N McFarlane (Salvation Army), Vice Chairman of SACRE, which outlined the main points raised at the QCDA Conference held on Tuesday 24 March 2010, which he attended. It was noted that the conference took place before the election and subsequent change in government and as a result a number of the issues discussed were presently uncertain. However, it was noted that the report was a true reflection of what happened on the day.

The contents of the update report were discussed, with particular attention being paid to points which had emerged during the panel sessions and group discussions of the conference, including the requirement for Academies to teach RE and for those without a religious character to do this by means of the Local Agreed Syllabus; that the provision of an RE Advisor was seen as key to establishing SACRE links with teachers and NASACRE would welcome any news of locally successful practice or initiatives; that SACRE annual reports to QCDA were still required.

With regard to the highlighted points, it was commented that one of the most helpful things for SACRE had been the appointment of Wendy Harrison as RE Adviser, as the Committee had fought hard for the post and it was hoped that this would continue to be funded as a lot of good work had been done to strengthen relationships. The Committee was asked if it wished a response to be made to NASACRE regarding the successful work being done in Lincolnshire.

The Committee was informed that although the QCDA would now no longer exist, it was thought that NASACRE would take over the idea of having all annual reports on their website. It was considered important that Lincolnshire SACRE produce a briefing sheet outlining the work they do which would be distributed to head teachers and heads of department.

It was noted that there were seven Academies at present and that fifty schools had expressed an interest and five of these had formally submitted a business case (the five schools were Branston Community College, West Grantham Federation, Caistor, Old Leake and Bourne Abbey). However, it was uncertain whether there would be time to implement all the changes before term started in September 2010.

The Chairman asked if the Committee wished another letter to be sent, along with a copy of the original letter to the Trent Valley and Priory Academies as they were the only ones to have not responded to SACRE. It was also suggested that the original letter be sent to the 5 schools which had submitted a business case to become academies.

It was discussed whether there was a benefit to this, as being academies, SACRE had no jurisdiction to check on their progress with regard to RE, however, it was thought that it was appropriate to provide them with an offer of support and guidance.

RESOLVED

That the Assistant Director for Children's Services would send out the letters to the Academies.

65. SUMMARY OF OFSTED INSPECTIONS OF LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS WITH REFERENCE TO PUPIL'S SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE SCHOOL'S PROVISION FOR COMMUNITY COHESION

SACRE received a report from Wendy Harrison, RE Adviser, summarising the positive features and areas for development in those schools inspected by OFSTED since the last report presented to SACRE on 9 March 2010.

The Chairman drew particular attention to the fact that there was inconsistency between inspection judgements, with some schools given identical medium/low scores but not always having areas for development or key issues for improvement specified. Specific comparisons were drawn between St Paul's Community Primary and Nursery School, Spalding and The Spalding Parish CE Day School, which both received identical scorings, but one was not given any areas for development. It was again thought that the occurrence of this discrepancy depended on who carried out the inspections.

The Chairman stated that there were seven schools which had achieved outstanding grades with reference to pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, particular attention was drawn to St Hugh's CE Mathematics and Computing College which had received 'outstanding' grades from OFSTED, but had been rated as 'inadequate' in the Section 48 inspections. There was a difference between the two types of inspections, and they were not comparable. It was agreed that a letter should be sent as SACRE always sent letters to schools rated 'outstanding' for SMSC by OFSTED. It should be made clear that the letter related to the OFSTED inspection.

David Clements, Diocesan Adviser, commented that they were currently working with the school following their Section 48 inspection, as they felt they were a better school than the inspection reflected.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report and comments made be noted
- (2) That letters of commendation be sent to the seven outstanding schools, ensuring that the focus of the letter to St Hugh's CE Mathematic and Computing College is the result of the OFSTED inspection.

66. SUMMARY OF SECTION 48 INSPECTIONS IN LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS

Consideration was given to a report by the Diocesan Director of Education which summarised the positive features and areas of development in those Church schools where a Section 48 Inspection had been carried out since the last SACRE meeting. The Committee was informed that Sutterton Fourfields Church of England School had now had a Section 48 inspection and the results were expected shortly, as none were available at the time the report was produced.

RESOLVED

That the report and comments made be noted.

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

The Committee considered a report by the Religious Education Adviser, which summarised the positive features and the areas for development in schools monitored since the last meeting held on 9 March 2010.

During discussion of this report, several points were highlighted, including whether it was appropriate to revisit schools which had significant areas for improvement, and was there still help which could be provided? It was suggested that the schools were contacted either by a letter or telephone call, to ask them if they would like another visit.

It was also noted that the work being done in primary schools should be welcomed and that the schools which performed best had high levels of head teacher support, and that strong leadership was important in developing RE.

It was queried how the 'scattergun' approach to the teaching of religions at key stage two which often led to superficial teaching could be addressed and whether this was due to time constraints. It was also noted that teachers often mistakenly thought that they had to cover every religion and the result sometimes was that this led to a lack of depth.

It was highlighted that it was important to note how much work took place at the special school which was visited, and that there was a lot that other schools could learn from it, as there was a strong commitment to RE and it was delivered well through a number of teaching styles and approaches.

The Chairman took this opportunity to bring a 'good news story' to the attention of the Committee. The Committee was informed that through some work that some year 8 pupils had been doing, one student at Bourne Grammar School had produced a board game which would teach students about Hinduism. The student's father was a printer and had produced 4 copies of the game for free. The Committee expressed their surprise at how well thought out and professionally produced the game was and thought it would be a wonderful resource for schools. It was also noted that the student had produced a website to accompany the game. The Committee was informed that the RE Adviser had been in discussions with the Head of RE at the school regarding the production of another game about local places of worship, which students would be able to visit. It was commented that it was hoped that this game could be piloted in secondary schools, and it could form part of 'Celebrating RE' which was taking place in March 2011. It was thought that this could be used as an example of good practice and it had the potential to be successful nationally, however, caution was expressed that the idea would need to be protected, it was possible that copyright might need to be looked into. But it was agreed by the whole Committee that this was a very exciting idea. The RE Adviser would be contacting the Head of Department and the student concerned to discuss this further. It was suggested by the Executive Councillor that advice could be sought for the County Council's legal team if necessary, but could he please be copied into any correspondence.

With regard to the 'Celebrating RE' event, it was suggested by the Chairman that the SACRE should put together a day where their achievements in developing RE could be showcased. It was stated that the Chairman, Assistant Director for Children's Services and the RE Adviser would all speak, and schools could be invited to come and share good and outstanding practice.

RESOLVED

That the reports and comments made by the SACRE be noted.

68. TRANSFORMING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Consideration was given to the recently released Ofsted report 'Transforming Religious Education' which had highlighted the need, amongst other things, for a better teaching of Christianity and non-religious beliefs. Members were provided with an executive summary of the report. It was important that issues relevant to Lincolnshire SACRE were raised with Ofsted, to ensure that its profile was raised both locally and nationally. This would also help to ensure that RE remained an important part of the curriculum.

It was commented that some people in this country had started to forget their own faith, and in order to understand other faiths it was important to understand your own, and it was the mis-understanding of a person's own faith which would lead to problems. It was also commented that it was important that teachings about beliefs and religions should also take place in the home.

The RE Adviser noted that from monitoring reports, there seemed to be experience of visiting churches but not other places of worship, and there needed to be a balance. It was also thought that children not being taught about other religions would be a backwards step, but it was also important that children were taught about Christianity.

It was queried whether a response should be sent to Ofsted from Lincolnshire SACRE affirming how beneficial the RE Adviser was and that it was hoped that the funding for this post would remain.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Executive Summary be noted and the comments of SACRE recorded.
- (2) That the RE Adviser would write to HMI for RE to highlight the good work being carried out by Lincolnshire SACRE

69. HUMANIST REPRESENTATIVE ON SACRE

Consideration was given to a letter which had been received by the Clerk of SACRE from the Chief Executive of the British Humanist Association, as a reminder that following the publication of new guidance on Religious Education from the government, it was possible to have a humanist representative as a full member of the Churches Group (Committee A) of a SACRE, and to encourage the SACRE to co-opt a humanist representative.

The Chairman requested the views of the SACRE in this matter, and the following points were raised:

- Great concern was registered by one member
- Humanist members had been very supportive of RE being taught and understood what RE was about and how it was taught in schools
- It was important to recognise what other people believed in
- Was Humanism a religion?
- What contribution would a Humanist representative make to this SACRE
- The teaching of non-religious views was something that needed to be strengthened

The Chairman suggested as a way forward that it would be beneficial if someone from the local Humanist Society be invited to give a presentation to the November meeting of SACRE before a decision was made whether to co-opt a representative onto the Committee, as Members were interested to know what a humanist believed in and what relevance humanism has to a child's education.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman would invite a member of the local Humanist Society to attend the next meeting of SACRE to give a presentation.

70. SUMMARY OF TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE RELATING TO THE REVIEW OF LINCOLNSHIRE'S AGREED SYLLABUS

Consideration was given to a report which showed a breakdown of the responses to a questionnaire which was sent to all schools during the spring term 2010 asking for their views about the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

Although the Chairman expressed disappointment at the number of responses received both the RE Adviser and the Assistant Director for Children's Services, reassured the SACRE that there had been a good response to the questionnaire. The general opinion from the responses gained was that schools liked the syllabus and did not want it changed as a whole, but that they would like some parts of it to be amended. It was commented that any changes would be more of a tweaking, rather

than a re-write. It was suggested that a group should be set up to look at the Agreed Syllabus for RE and the group should comprise a number of teachers and a selection of SACRE members, but that the group should meet outside of the SACRE meetings. Volunteers to attend the Agreed Syllabus Conference were also sought, as well as volunteers to be involved with the working party for the review of the syllabus. It was commented that members of SACRE who volunteered for this working party would not be expected to attend every meeting, and it was not expected to be a huge piece of work.

RESOLVED

That the following members of SACRE be noted as volunteers to sit on a working party to review the Agreed Syllabus for RE: Mr B Ahmed, Mrs C Dring, Mr N McFarlane, Ms J Austin, Mrs C Turner, Mark Plater and Paul Thompson

71. LINCOLNSHIRE INTER-FAITH FORUM VOLUNTEER

The Chairman requested a volunteer to attend the Lincolnshire Inter-Faith Forum meetings. The Committee was informed that there were 9 meetings a year which were held at the Friends Meeting House in Lincoln. Ms J Austin agreed to attend the next meeting to determine what sort of commitment would be required.

RESOLVED

That Ms J Austin would attend the next meeting of the Lincolnshire Inter-Faith Forum and report back to the Committee.

72. SACRE ACTION PLAN

SACRE received its Action Plan for 2009/2010, which it was commented was for information, and there would be further detail at the next meeting

RESOLVED

That the contents of the action plan be noted.

73. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday 9 November 2010, Tuesday 8 March 2011 at 2:00 pm at the County Offices, Newland, Lincoln.

It was agreed that Mrs C Dring would lead on prayers at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 4:13 pm.