

ITEM 6

Time Commenced: 7:16 pm
Time Finished: 8:46 pm

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - 10 MARCH 2011

Present:

Group A - Christianity and Other World Faiths

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|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Ruth Dolby | Jewish Faith (in the Chair) |
| Maryam Djavid | Bahai Faith |
| Joan Price | Pentecostal Church |
| Lucy Care | Religious Society of Friends |
| Rev. Mrs. Mair Bradley | United Reformed Church |
| Aslam Siddiqi | Islamic Faith |
| Phil Royle | Methodist Church |

Group B - Church of England

Rosemary Wibberley
Viv Lawrence

Group C - Teachers' Associations

Kelly Bradley NUT

Group D - Local Education Authority

Councillors Turner and Wood

Co-opted Members

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|----------------|------------------------------|
| Mike Lake | British Humanist Association |
| Laura Connelly | The Open Centre |
| Dr Phil Henry | Multi-Faith Centre |

In attendance:

Graham Falgate Education Officer, Derby City Council

32/10 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Atwal, Higginbottom and F Khan, Raj Bali, Rev Roy Ninkovic, Alison Brown, Kate McRae and Ian Shaw.

33/10 Late Items to be introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

34/10 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

35/10 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 25 November 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

36/10 Draft Guidance on Parental Concerns to Visits to Places of Worship

The SACRE considered the draft guidance on parental concerns to visits to place of worship, produced by a sub group of SACRE. Mike Lake reported that he had visited a Derbyshire school at the request of the Head teacher to talk to parents who were objecting to their children visiting Places of Worship in Derby. He stated that parents expressed concerns regarding their children being forced to make symbolic gestures towards religions and it was noted that some parents believed learning about other religions could be achieved without leaving the classroom. In view of this, Mike Lake suggested that the guidance needed revising. It was suggested that the guidance should be sent to head teachers for comment. Graham Falgate requested that members of the SACRE send him any updated photos of places of worship that they may have.

Resolved:

- 1. to send the draft guidance on parental concerns regarding visits to places of worship to Derby city head teachers for comment for a 12 month period;**
- 2. to send any photos of Derby places of worship to Graham Falgate**

37/10 Update on Proposal to Establish a Free School in Derby

Mike Lake reported that preliminary meetings with An Noor, who were intending to open a free school, had been positive, and that it was clear that the primary motive of An Noor was to address educational underachievement amongst pupils from Pakistani and Muslim backgrounds. It was added that An Noor would be meeting with local primary schools the following week to discuss the proposals and that Mike Lake and others would be in attendance. Members of the SACRE requested feedback from this meeting.

Resolved that Mike Lake would provide feedback on the meeting of An Noor with primary schools at the next SACRE

38/10 RE in the English Baccalaureate

Graham Falgate reported that the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, intended to change the existing GCSE system, with the aim of limiting the breadth of subjects studied and increasing the depth. The proposed revision of the system would include an English Baccalaureate, from which Religious Education would be excluded as one of the core subjects. It was noted that the Secretary of State had commented that he was prepared to look again at the proposals and that Religious Education remains a statutory subject which needed to be taught. The SACRE raised concerns at the proposed exclusion of RE from the Baccalaureate, suggesting that this could lead to the subject not being taught by specialists and little time being devoted to it. Members of the SACRE commented that the Baccalaureate could become too restrictive and it was noted that representations had been made from other subject areas, such as Music. The production of a formal response to the proposals was discussed by the SACRE.

Resolved to write a formal letter to the Secretary of State for Education, (Michael Gove MP), the Minister of State for Children and Families (Sarah Teather MP), and the 3 Derbyshire MPs expressing SACRE's concern at the proposed exclusion of Religious Education from the English Baccalaureate

39/10 SACRE Action Plan 2011-13

The SACRE considered the production of an Action Plan for 2011-13. The SACRE agreed that it was not in a position to produce an Action Plan until the issues surrounding the proposed restructure of the Children and Young Peoples Directorate had been resolved, including the level of officer support available to the committee.

40/10 Restructuring of Children and Young Peoples Services

Graham Falgate reported that as part of a restructure of the Council up to 570-600 full-time equivalent posts were being removed. In the proposed new structure for the Children and Young Peoples Directorate, which was subject to a consultation period, the post of RE advisor and its associated support team was being removed. This would result in less officer support to SACRE. Members of the SACRE questioned how this would affect the committee and it was reported that it was a statutory body that needed to meet once each school term, and would therefore continue in some form, however there would no longer be a dedicated lead officer for the SACRE. SACRE raised concerns at the loss of the RE advisor service and viewed this as crucial work. It was noted that Derbyshire County Council had been restructured and kept these posts, and the possibility of working joint working with the County Council was considered. The SACRE considered the submission of a formal response to the restructure.

Resolved:

- 1. to write to the Interim Strategic Director for Children and Young People, the Service Director for Learning and Inclusion and the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People to express concern at the proposed loss of support to SACRE and the RE, PSHE and Citizenship service and the effect this would have on community cohesion and the opportunity for children to develop in to well-rounded adults;**
- 2. to invite the Strategic Director for Children and Young People to the next meeting of the SACRE;**
- 3. to invite the Strategic Director for Children and Young People for a tour of a Derby school's RE department**

41/10 Annual Jewish SACRE Conference

Ruth Dolby reported that she would soon be attending the annual Jewish SACRE conference and invited members of the SACRE to suggest items that they would like raising. It was suggested that the level of officer support to different SACREs be raised.

Dr. Phil Henry also reported that the University of Derby would be bringing in a new MA course called Religion and Society, starting in 2012.

42/10 Date of Next Meeting

Summer Term: 22 June 2011 – The Multi-Faith Centre

MINUTES END