

PUBLIC

**MINUTES** of a meeting of **STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION** held on Monday, 21 March 2022 at County Hall, Matlock, DE4 3AG.

**PRESENT**

Councillor R Flatley (in the Chair)

**LEA Representatives (Committee D)**

Councillors C Dale, R Flatley, N Gourlay (substitute member) and S Swann

**Teacher's Associations (Committee C)**

K Gibbs, D Hammond and A Howes,

**Church of England Representatives (Committee B)**

Rev S Watson

**Other Christian and Non-Christian (Committee A)**

N Hoskin -Stone and Mrs S Lewer

**Co-opted Members**

K McCrae

In attendance - Mr S Ford (Childrens Services) & Mr I Walters (Commissioning, Communities and Policy)

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors A Dale and J Patten, and J Clapham, E Johnson, N O'Callaghan and A Rehman

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**1/22 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, and members introduced themselves

**2/22 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (IF ANY)**

There were no declarations of Interest

**3/22 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** to confirm the minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 8 November 2021

There were no matters arising from the minutes

#### **4/22 MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON RE**

Steve Ford had provided members with a link to the full ministerial statement made by Robin Walker, MP for Worcester and Minister of State for School Standards, on 9 November 2021 in response to a question from Kim Leadbeater MP. He stated that the government firmly believed that religious education (RE) was important. Good quality RE was essential in developing children's knowledge of British values and traditions, and those of other countries. RE was a vital part of fostering understanding among different faiths and beliefs, which is why it was a compulsory subject for all state-funded schools up to the age of 18.

Members present generally felt that this was to be welcomed and a positive step forward with members noting RE's close links to other areas of the curriculum such as citizenship, history and personal, social, health and economic education. Following discussion it was agreed that the Chairman on behalf of the SACRE write to the minister to reinforce the view of teachers that this ran the risk of RE being incorporated too heavily into other such subjects and losing its distinct benefits gained by teaching the subject independently.

Members also noted that teachers of RE, as with all subjects, had been placed under immense pressure over the last few years within schools. Notably, it was raised that schools had suffered from higher rates of staff absences and restricted capacity due to the pandemic. These were issues that the Committee would like the Government to recognise as part of its ongoing support for the education sector

**RESOLVED** to note the Ministerial Statement and that a response would be sent from the Chairman to the Minister as detailed above.

#### **5/22 CASE STUDIES OF GOOD PRACTICE IN SCHOOLS**

Steve Ford had provided members in advance of the meeting with case studies of good practice from St Andrews CE Junior School, Hadfield and Baslow St Anne's CE Primary.

As a Church of England school, the Christian ethos at St Andrews was at the centre of everything they did. Jesus recognised that true healing was not just about the physical, but the inner person; time and again he addressed that inner aspect of people's lives. Recognising this, the school sought to develop the inner-self alongside teaching and learning with a focus on moral integrity and the development of courageous advocacy. They realised that a strong, resilient self-image is key to good learning, so focusing on mental health was just as important as effective teaching. The School wanted the children to become self-aware, problem solvers who were resilient and able to resolve conflict effectively.

At the centre of the schools mental health provision lies MACAWS (Motivating All Children to Achieve With Support)<sup>i</sup>. It is the schools main priority to help all children to achieve the best they can, both academically and personally. However, it was understood that sometimes life doesn't always go to plan and that children may need a little extra support to ensure both mental and emotional well-being whilst they are in our care.

MACAWS did this in a number of ways including a special sensory quiet area where children can go if they need time alone, a MACAWS room where lead staff can help children with their issues, and Mental Health Champions – year 5 and 6 pupils who provide a mentoring and support role within the school. The school also runs Relax Kids sessions to help children regulate their emotions and learn self-soothing techniques. MACAWS is fully integrated with their SEND provision and was there to support all children who might need it.

The Headteacher from Baslow St Anne's Primary School, working alongside the Diocese of Derby had been given the opportunity to work out in Kolkata with 39 teachers and students from Derby University.

She described the highlight as being based in a school where, although a very early start, the children came in so keen to learn and be at school. Working alongside the committed teachers and finding ways to further improve classroom life and learning for these children, who sat on hard wooden floors with a simple blackboard and piece of chalk. This was a real learning curve for the children at Baslow, where they could see the difference in their school lives and the way they learned and the privileges they have. This instigated the School Council to organise raising funds to enhance provisions for our link school and children in Kolkata.

The Headteacher felt privileged to have had the experience and the importance for the school to keep this link with Mahamaya School strong and as a prominent part of their curriculum, global awareness, alongside courageous advocacy, and fundraising

Members commented on the excellent case studies provided and Steve Ford informed those present that these would form part of a report to be sent to the DFE outlining the ongoing positive work with regards to RE that was going on in Derbyshire & Derby City.

**RESOLVED** to note the case studies showing good practice.

## **6/22 JOURNEYS OF DESTINY & DESTINIES - UPDATE**

Members had received a summary report from Ava Hunt which provided details of the Journeys of Destiny and Destinies – companion pieces – which were awarded the Children & Young People Now Arts and Culture Award in March 2021

Sadly due to a lack of ongoing funding, there were currently no plans to re-tour Journeys of Destiny into schools. Ava Hunt Theatre (AHT) continued to work with young people using drama as a pedagogy delivering workshops that explored values and citizenship in Adult Education centres across the county. These workshops had been developed with Sally Siner (Prevent Officer for Derby City).

AHT remained open to discussion about how they might fund and continue to use live theatre/drama or digital theatre resources to work in schools and further support to the aims and objectives of SACRE.

Steve suggested that Ava and perhaps some of the young actors be invited to the Development Day in the Summer, with the hope of providing a live performance or a recording of it.

**RESOLVED** to note the update

## **7/22 FUTURE TRAINING FOR SCHOOLS - DRAFT PROPOSALS**

RE Today Services had been delighted to work again with Derbyshire SACRE and for the first time with Derby SACRE to produce the 2021-2026 Joint Derby and Derbyshire Agreed syllabus.

The training was planned, written, and delivered by Fiona Moss and Lat Blaylock from RE Today services. These day long face to face events were spread across the county to ensure they were accessible to all schools.

In total over face to face, virtual and recordings of the training almost 400 teachers of RE have been trained on using the syllabus. Overall teachers graded the launch 94% very good and 5% good.

Steve Ford had now provided members with possible RE Today training for Derby City and Derbyshire schools as follows:

**Help I'm the RE subject leader: Primary:** 1 day: can be provided as a face to face event or a virtual event.

This course was ideal for new subject leaders and would take place face to face/online. If teachers had been a RE subject leader for a while and had not attended similar training they would also find this useful. This gives great support to a new subject leader in a community or a church school during their early days of leading the subject

**RE in the Early years:** *1 day or half a day: this works best as a face to face event*

How does RE fit into the new EYFS requirements?

This course would provide ideas for teaching and learning that fit with the new requirements. It would also give time for practitioners to share ideas and resources. There will be suggestions of how to include story, festival art and song into RE in the reception class.

**Deep diving into RE: Primary and Secondary:** Ideally 2 x 2 hour online sessions with a gap task or (less ideal) 1 x 4 hour long afternoon

These sessions would help teachers to consider what a good RE curriculum looked like and how to answer any questions on RE provision, quality and progression in the subject from visitors including OFSTED inspectors.

They would look carefully at the OFSTED research review and consider what that might mean for RE in our schools.

**RESOLVED** to note the training proposals

## **8/22 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman updated members in relation to the response from DCC and the District and Borough Councils to the current situation in Ukraine in terms of housing refugees and financial support to help the effort.

K McCrae, informed members that the Open Centre in Derby now had a lot of online resources, such as videos and teaching aids, that people could subscribe to.