

STATUTORY CONFERENCE ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

24th MAY 2006

PRESENT: Councillor P Harrand (Chair)
Mr D Carnelley - Orthodox Church
Mr M Davies - Humanist Society of West Yorkshire
Major K Lawson - Salvation Army
Mrs M Wicks - Baptist Church
Mr K Torode - Governor Representative
Rev P Bristow - Diocese of York
Mrs M Newton - Methodist Church
Mrs A Nicholl - Diocese of Ripon & Leeds
Mr B Hayward - ATL (Teacher)
Miss J Warner - NASUWT (Teacher)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor P Ewens - Leeds City Council
Mrs E Guild - SACRE Consultant
Mr J Grieve - Legal & Democratic Services

34 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor R Harker, Mrs F Beevers, Mr A Key, Mrs S Moody and Mrs Wedgebury

35 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23rd March 2006 be accepted as a true and correct record

36 Matters Arising

Arrangements for Future Meetings (Minute 26 refers)

In questioning the resolution Mr Davies said that it was his understanding that a questionnaire would be circulated to all Members in order to ascertain a start time which would be suitable to the majority of Members. Mr Davies said he was unaware if such a questionnaire had been circulated.

In responding the Chair said that he did recall the discussion about a questionnaire and he did agree that was probably the most appropriate way to consult all Members

RESOLVED – That a questionnaire be circulated to all Members in order to ascertain a start time which would be suitable to the majority of Members

37 Arrangements for Agreed Syllabus Conference Meetings

RESOLVED – That proposed dates and times for Agreed Syllabus Conference Meetings be included within the questionnaire to be circulated to all SACRE Members (minutes 36 refers)

38 Leeds Agreed Syllabus Writing Group 2nd May 2006

Members received a report providing a resume of the Leeds Agreed Syllabus Writing Group held on 2nd May 2006

The report listed the main discussions items which included:

- A draft overview of the format for the new Agreed Syllabus, incorporating the key elements of the Non - Statutory National Framework for RE

- The use of “ I can statements”

Foundation Stage / Key Stage 1 – Looking at level 1

Key Stage 2 – Looking at level 5

Key Stage 3, 14 – 19 – Looking at level 7

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted

39 Arrangements for Future Meetings of the Writings

Liz Guild reported that finance had been obtained from Education Leeds in order to fund future meetings of the Writing Groups; this funding would be available from September 2006. Further discussion with the Groups was now required to determine dates for future meetings

RESOLVED - That the report be noted

40 The Place of “I Can Statements” in the 2006 Leeds Agreed Syllabus

The Chair led a discussion on the use of “I can Statements”. Liz Guild reported that the I can statements used in Secondary Schools were divided into sub levels and were used as an assessment for learning. It was also useful to know what the next stage was.

Liz Guild said that the SACRE needs to consider the use of I can Statements, for example should they be seen as guidance and not statutory use of Sub levels

Margaret Newton said that the guidance aspect was very important and this was the general opinion of Members

RESOLVED – That “I can Statements” be produced as guidance both in Primary and Secondary Schools

41 The Aims of the Leeds Agreed Syllabus 2006

Members considered an extract from the Leeds Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (Revised 1996) which set out the aims of the Agreed Syllabus. Commenting on the document, Liz Guild said that she was seeking Members support in reviewing those aims.

In considering the aims, Members suggested the following wording to the paragraph dealing with knowledge about Christianity and the other principal religions.

“To help pupils and students to develop knowledge about Christianity and the other principal religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism)”

RESOLVED – That the suggested amendments be incorporated into the Leeds Agreed Syllabus 2006

42 The Identification of the Religions to be studied in the 2006 Leeds Agreed Syllabus

The Chair led a discussion on the identification of the religions to be studied in the 2006 Leeds Agreed Syllabus. Liz Guild reported that six principle religions should be covered by Key Stage 3 (Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism). It was not uncommon for children moving from Primary to Secondary to encounter gaps in the teaching of some religions.

Liz Guild suggested that given the multi-faith nature of the City, by Key Stage 2 all pupils should have “encountered” each of the principle religions thus providing a good base for moving onto Key Stage 3

The suggestion received positive feedback from Members

It was further suggested that the Leeds Agreed Syllabus could recommend to schools what religions should be studied in the Key Stages, for example:

Key Stage 1- Christianity + Judaism

Key Stage 2 – Hinduism + Islam

Key Stage 2 (upper) – Buddhism + Sikhism

In seeking clarification the Chair said that presumably the schools would retain some element of choice?

In responding, Liz Guild confirmed that would be the case

Does the SACRE wish to become prescriptive? asked Mr Davies

Mrs Newton said that it is more preferable to encounter themes rather than specify certain religions. There must be some degree of flexibility

It was the general opinion of Members that they were not in favour of prescribing the religions to be taught and that all religions should be covered

RESOLVED – That a summary report be prepared for the next meeting providing a variety of options based on today's discussion for the SACRE's consideration

43 Provision for Pupils to Study Religious Education Age 14-19 in the 2006 Leeds Agreed Syllabus

Members considered a report setting out the QCA/ DfES recommendations (page 31 of the Non-Statutory National Framework for Religious Education), that religious education should be taught at the following ages through accredited qualifications, so that, from the earliest opportunity, schools make available:

- For all students aged 14-16, at least one course in religious education or religious studies leading to a qualification approved under Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000
- For all students aged 16-19, at least one course in religious education or religious studies leading to a qualification approved under Section 96 that represents progression from 14- 16

In respect of the second bullet point it was reported that High Schools were generally not in favour of this recommendation

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted

44 Any Other Business

There were no issues raised under any other business

45 Date and Time of Future Meetings

RESOLVED – To note that the next meeting of the Statutory Conference on Religious Education has been scheduled for Thursday 13th July 2006 at 4.15pm

