

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
21st February, 2007**

Present:-

Group 1

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Group 2

Rev. N. Elliott
Mrs. J. Fern

Group 3

Mr. T. Pinto
Mr. D. Homer
Mrs. J. Howard

Group 4

Mr. V. Bovan
Mr. B. Tannett
Mr. A. Dexter
Mr. M. Ghani

Also in attendance were Mrs. A. Miller and Mrs. A. Routledge as co-opted members and Mr. K. Robinson (Rotherham MBC)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sharman and Littleboy.

2. NEW MEMBERS

The meeting welcomed Mrs. J. Howard, Mrs. A. Routledge and Mr. A. Dexter to their first meeting.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on the 11th October, 2006 were received as a correct record.

4. MATTER ARISING

(a) BME Young People's Schools Council and Teaching of Islam

Kevin Robinson informed the meeting that he had spoken to Head Teachers on the issue of finding space at lunchtime for Muslims to fast/pray.

The Head Teachers were sympathetic to the matter and undertook to address it in time for the next Ramadan.

(b) Examination Results 2006

The meeting was informed that Thomas Rotherham College had provided details of its RE Examination results, which had been good for 2006.

(c) Artefacts for Schools

Mr. Bovan informed the meeting that there were artefacts available from the Salvation Army for use by schools.

Arrangements would be made for schools to be informed of a contact number.

5. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2006

Kevin Robinson reported on the proposed content of the 2006 Annual Report, a draft of which was submitted.

The draft Annual Report included reference to :-

- the Syllabus Conference and the Locally Agreed Syllabus
- OFSTED reports on RE
- Examination results in RE
- In Service Training for RE
- Collective Worship issues
- Contribution to Community Cohesion
- Rotherham Grid for Learning
- SACRE Development Plan and NASACRE Newsletter

Discussion took place regarding examination results in RE and which examination boards were being used by schools.

Agreed:- (a) That the content of the draft Annual Report be accepted.

(b) That information on the examination boards used by schools be submitted to a future meeting, including the results achieved by the schools for comparison purposes.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS ON THE SACRE

A paper was submitted which informed the meeting that Rotherham MBC is carrying out equality impact assessments (EIA) on all its functions, policies and procedures as part of the work on the Equality Standard for Local Government. This includes existing policies, new policies or those which are changed.

An EIA is a tool to identify whether or not policies, services and procedures are having an adverse impact on a particular group of people due to gender, race or disability, or in the case of new or changing policies, a potential adverse impact. In other words, is the policy or procedure being provided in a way that meets the needs of the customer and not in a discriminatory manner?

Service/Business managers have the responsibility for carrying out impact assessments but are advised to set up a small project group.

The results of the EIA are used to set equality objectives that become part of business plans, leading to improvements to services and employment practices. Policies may need amending in the light of the results of the impact assessment, especially if adverse impacts are identified. If any negative impact would amount to unlawful discrimination the policy must be changed unless there is an objective, lawful reason to justify this.

What Equality impact assessments will do was set out in the paper submitted.

As well as using the information to make improvements to services and employment practices, the impact assessments will also be published on the Council's website for information for the public and for audit purposes.

The need for a small group to look at the tool in detail to assess the impact of the work of SACRE in relation to Equality issues was highlighted.

Agreed:- That arrangements be made for a small project group to carry out equality impact assessment.

7. CONFERENCE ON EFFECTIVE SACRE'S AND IMPLICATIONS

Kevin Robinson outlined the content of the above conference which included a presentation on :-

- developing, established and advanced SACREs; what they do and how they move forward
- what SACREs need to do
- what may SACREs in fact experience which prevents them from developing i.e. weaknesses
- representation and social harmony
- monitoring provision for RE and collective worship
- action planning by SACREs

A paper was distributed which was to be sent to primary schools on self evaluation of RE and collective worship.

It was hoped that paper would result in a good response from schools.

Comments on the paper included:-

- insert definitions in respect of the categories

- outstanding
 - good
 - satisfactory
 - unsatisfactory

- schools to highlight the good work being done in schools

- send the paper to schools electronically

Reference was made to the paper which set out 30 + things a good SACRE can do.

It was proposed that SACRE hold a day course to consider how to action them.

Agreed:- (a) That the SACRE constitution be distributed to its new members.

(b) That the self evaluation form be distributed to schools, with amendments as discussed, after Easter, being returned in time to analyse the results and report thereon to the June meeting of SACRE.

(c) That the day course on Equality Impact Assessment and developing SACRE be arranged for Wednesday 28th March, 2007.

(d) That the activities of SACRE, and development proposals, be highlighted by including them in Rotherham Matters and the governors newsletter.

8. NEW RE SCHEMES OF WORK FROM QCA

Kevin Robinson informed the meeting of new RE schemes of work which were linked to the National Framework for RE.

The new units of work are on the QCA website and a paper was distributed which set out a guide for using the new units at foundation stage and Key Stages 1, 2 and 3.

Kevin would be working with schools on the units of work and involving primary school representatives.

Agreed:- That the information be received.

9. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 20th June, 1997 at 4.00 p.m.