

**1ROTHERHAM STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
(SACRE) - 07/10/14**

**ROTHERHAM STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
(SACRE)
TUESDAY, 7TH OCTOBER, 2014**

Present:-N. Goodwin (in the Chair).

Group A – other Christian denominations and other faiths: - I. Jones (Evangelical Christian), T. Shaw (Bahai), S. Alam (Islamic), N. Goodwin (Project Manager for Community Education Connection - a Christian Education Charity and the Hub Christian Community (Pentecostal)), L. Sharpe (Salvation Army), M. Shah (Islamic).

Group B – the Church of England: - No member was in attendance but communications had been sent to the Diocese of Sheffield to increase representation.

Group C – Teachers' Professional Associations: - C. Webster (Vice-Chair).

Group D – Rotherham Local Authority: - Councillor T. Sharman.

Also in attendance were: - H. Etheridge and V. Gregory.

Apologies for absence were received from: - Z. Ahmed, G. Harrison, G. Raha, Councillor C. Beaumont, A. Griffin, R. Dyson, D. Homer, Councillor D. Lelliott, G. Gray, C. Wells, Councillor D. Roche.

**11. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING
HELD ON 16TH JUNE, 2014.**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 16th June, 2014, were considered.

Agreed: - That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as a correct record.

**12. SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS - HILLTOP - FOLLOWING ON FROM
THEIR 2012/13 REWARD - TBC.**

Agreed: - That this item be scheduled for a future meeting of the Rotherham SACRE.

13. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND DETERMINATIONS UPDATE.

The Rotherham SACRE noted that three Determinations had been agreed and were currently in place across Rotherham. The Determinations had been granted following a working party of the SACRE visiting the schools and observing acts of Collective Worship.

The Collective Worship guidance booklet had been printed and a copy

would be issued to all schools along with a letter informing them of the requirements of Collective Worship and how to apply for a Determination if they felt it necessary for their school's circumstances.

Agreed: - That the finalised version of the Collective Worship policy be circulated to all members of the Rotherham SACRE.

14. COMMUNITY COHESION UPDATE.

The Schools' Community Cohesion and Engagement Officer had a pre-existing commitment and could not attend this meeting.

Agreed: - That the item regarding the community cohesion update be arranged for the next meeting of the Rotherham SACRE.

15. GCSE / A-LEVEL PERFORMANCE (INC. GLOSSARY OF TERMS).

Vanessa Gregory, RE Curriculum Consultant, introduced Rotherham's 2013/2014 un-validated GCSE and A-Level results for Religious Education / Religious Studies, which had been received after the Rotherham SACRE agenda was circulated and published.

Glossary of terms: -

NOR = Number on roll;

NOE = number of entries.

Vanessa and Caroline Webster, Vice-Chair, explained that careful attention needed to be paid to the respective numbers relating on numbers of roll and numbers of pupils entered for exams when looking at the overall performance levels. As an example, schools/providers performing well above average but with smaller numbers of entries may just be entering the most able or most engaged students. Other schools and providers with more average outcomes may be entering more students / a wider range of abilities and interests.

The traditional short course which was equivalent of half a GCSE would still count as a qualification but would no longer count to schools' overall performance at GCSE. This would likely mean that schools would not enter pupils for short course GCSEs. There were ongoing issues with BTEC.

Vanessa reported that some short course results were missing. She had queried where these were and was awaiting a response.

The following points were discussed: -

- Had Wath Comprehensive gone to 100% full-course? They were 100% short course;
- Students tended to value a full GCSE more than a half-GCSE

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- qualification;
- The different levels of average points score – schools with high scores may only be entering high-ability children for the qualification. Some schools enter far more children than others;
 - Rotherham's overall average was 39.1 points, which would be equivalent of just under a grade C (40 points);
 - RE received less time on the curriculum than the other subjects and did not have controlled assessments. It was excellent that some schools were achieving 70% A* - C;
 - Aston Academy had recently received the Silver Award for RE;
 - The transition from doing RE at GCSE level to opting to do A-Level;
 - Why were Rotherham's colleges not included in the returns presented? They were important stakeholders in the Rotherham SACRE and it would be good to have a link/liaison between the two;
 - Again, was the link between the Rotherham SACRE and the academy schools across Rotherham strong/robust? Were academies following the agreed curriculum, Collective Worship and so on? Rotherham SACRE would welcome a mode of communication;
 - What were the trends relating to the number of entries for RE both in Rotherham and regionally? Was take-up of the subject steady/increasing/declining?

Agreed: - (1) Contact Maltby Academy and Thrybergh School and Sports College about their outcomes.

(2) Look at ways of increasing the communication and liaison between the Rotherham SACRE and Rotherham's higher education providers and Rotherham's academy schools.

16. FEEDBACK ON PUPIL CONFERENCE.

Feedback was provided by Nicki Goodwin, Chair of the Rotherham SACRE, and Vanessa Gregory on the 'Respect for All – pupil/teacher conference' that took place on 26th September, 2014. The conference was led by Lat Blaylock and was hosted at The Hub Christian Community with the purpose of bringing schools together for shared ideas and resources.

Nicki wished to record her thanks to Vanessa for really promoting the conference in the first three weeks of the new school year. Three primary schools and one secondary school attended and pupils from Years 5, 6 and 8 took part.

Nicki described it as a superb day even though the numbers of schools participating was a little lower than desired/expected. However, it was agreed that the short amount of notice schools had had in the new term was not a long time. Although a smaller group (there were aspirations for

100 pupils) it had worked out as a nice number for the first event. The children attending from different schools worked in groups and mixed with children from other schools.

The day consisted of four tasks: -

- Shared story – Mozambique – Bishop: - the pupils chose a picture of a weapon and converted it from an instrument of killing to an instrument of peace;
- From a selection of 20 questions about beliefs – e.g. ‘religion can make peace’ the pupils were asked to choose 3 and respond to them;
- The Commitment Game – written statements. Pupils were asked to ask the person to their left to explain where they would place the card on a table of differing levels of commitment and explain why they had placed it there. Pupils were then asked to do the same for a character – e.g. Bart Simpson – and consider the question from their point of view;
- Sculpture – create a peace sculpture.

Throughout the tasks many different religions and religious’ viewpoints were discussed / covered.

Next steps: -

It was hoped that next year’s conference would be free at point of entry funded by ?????. It was hoped that attendance would grow following word of mouth.

The Teachers in attendance were asked to take back the lessons learned to their own school and teaching.

Rawmarsh Rosehill Junior School pupils who had attended the event had given an assembly to the full school on the event and what it had meant to them.

Consideration needed to be given to how the learning from this conference could be spread to other schools: -

- Shortage of time;
- Paperwork involved for taking pupils on a trip could prove to be prohibitive;
- Challenge to learn.

Other conferences / training opportunities: -

The annual Teacher Conference was planned for 29th January, 2015, and would be facilitated by Lat Blaylock. The focus would be on how to ensure that British values were covered, and assessment. It was aimed

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at teachers of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3.

Ideas were being explored to undertake joint South Yorkshire training for Religious Education Teachers. The Sheffield SACRE would advertise training provided by Rotherham to the sub-region. Sheffield, Barnsley and Doncaster teachers accessing the training would be charged. This model could be rolled-out further than the sub-region area if it proved successful.

SACRE members could also attend. Mariam Shah expressed an interest in attending.

Agreed: - That the information shared be noted.

17. FEEDBACK ON REWARDS EVENING.

All noted the positive REwards ceremony that took place on 16th June, 2014. The 2013/2014 ceremony demonstrated a pleasing build- up of momentum from the 2012/2013 ceremony. There was a wider variety of awards/organisations and winners this time. It was felt to be a positive step that young people had attended the REwards ceremony, and that rewards were given out in every category.

The successful nominees who received a REward were thrilled.

It was agreed that the ceremony should continue each year.

It was important that the REwards and categories should get out to School and to the right people in the know. Could the invitation be personalised in any way? Could it be sent directly to the named email addresses of RE co-ordinators? Having a bank of email addresses for RE co-ordinators would be useful for other SACRE messages / communications. Trish Williams suggested that each member of SACRE be given a shared of the list of Rotherham's schools to contact to promote REwards / Rotherham SACRE.

Plans for next year: -

- Photographer;
- Promote in the Advertiser – before and/or after the event?;
- Continue to raise the profile in Rotherham.

Agreed: - That these suggestions be used to plan for the 2014/2015 REwards event.

18. DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

Agreed: - Due to a lack of time in the meeting, this item was deferred to early in the agenda of the next meeting as it was felt that aspects had been covered by the other agenda items.

19. VISIT TO JERUSALEM.

Mariam Shah, Group A – other faiths representative, gave a presentation of a family trip she had taken to the Middle East, including Jordan, Jerusalem, Mecca and other Holy places in the Muslim, Christian and Jewish faiths.

Mariam showed photographs of the trip she described as the ‘trip of a lifetime’. It had brought the religious teachings and stories she had learnt to life.

In a fantastic presentation Mariam spoke about: -

- From Yorkshire to Jordan – change in the geography and landscapes;
- Cave of the seven sleepers – which happened much earlier than the Qu’aran was revealed. The story centred on the persecution of a non-Muslim who was interested in finding out more about the Islamic faith. He went on a journey with others and hid from danger in a cave. Allah sent them to sleep for 309 years. There were either 7, 8 or 9 sleepers in the cave protected by a dog. They thought that it was overnight but they slept until it was safe for them to practice their religion. When they awoke they tried to use old money and the present King heard about them and understood. It was deemed a miracle;
- Seeing artefacts;
- ‘Goosebumps’ moments when things were just as described in the Qu’aran – ‘awe struck’;
- ‘There was a presence there – surrounded by richness and everything made sense – lightbulb moment’;
- Shrines were not to be worshipped but believers may visit and pay their respects;
- People from all over the world came together to visit;
- Border between Jordan and Palestine – ‘no mans land’;
- Original ‘gibla’ where all Prophets met together and prayed – led by Mohammed PBUH;
- Dome of the rock – visible from all areas of Jerusalem;
- Garden of Gethsemane;
- Mariam’s driver gave Christian, Jewish and Islamic perspective of the area;
- Mount of Olives;
- Old walls of Jerusalem;
- King David’s tomb;
- Attendant – always praying;
- Room of the last supper – all overawed by being in the room of the last supper;
- Building has been a Church, Mosque and was now a Synagogue. All faiths had left their mark over hundreds of years;

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- Top of King David's tomb;
- Mariam's party was followed by soldiers carrying guns it was a bit unnerving but Mariam described that she had never felt more safe in her life than in that place;
- Armed guides everywhere but it did not scare Mariam or her daughter;
- Areas of segregation across Jerusalem were upsetting, especially where there were signs like 'Dangerous to your lives and against Israeli law', this was really sad to see;
- Whole view of Palestine;
- Imam's stand;
- Staircase built by a soldier – destroyed in 1954 – rebuilt in exact same way;
- Courtyard of the mosque is completely full on Holy days and Fridays;
- Rising of the ground;
- Columns built around sacred ground – could not enter;
- There is a stone that had Prophet Mohammed's PBUH hair upon it – people could touch it and a beautiful smell came from the stone;
- Cats everywhere – really well looked after;
- Dead Sea – God sent a warning to the people to be better Muslims. He sent an angel who, with one pounding of their feet, obliterated the land. This is why the land was so rich with Dead Sea minerals. Muslims did not tend to use or promote them as it is something God did;
- Prophet Lot – wife turned to stone because she would not leave;
- Mosa PBUH;
- Scenery – desert;
- Mount of Temptation;
- Ears popped – lowest point on earth;
- At the end of the trip a new baby had been born in the family – really good news and made the trip even more special;
- Mecca;
- Spiritual high;
- Did not take many photographs there as it felt disrespectful;
- Busy – Hajj must be really busy;
- Call to prayer – shops shut immediately;
- Graveyard of companions and prophets;
- Tents to protect people from the sun – beautiful;
- Mosque – peaceful in a really busy place;
- Green dome – Medina – where Mohammed PBUH is buried;
- Opening of gates to get to Prophet's grave – there was a big rush. Mariam stayed behind to help an old lady and was able to see the grave when the rush had eased off. One kindness gave her that reward;
- Shot an arrow – piece of heaven.

Mariam summed up the trip as an incredible experience that put things

into perspective.

Agreed: - That the information shared be noted.

20. REWARD NOMINATION.

Agreed: - (1) That Mrs. Gail Atkin be nominated for an REward for her long-standing commitment to the teaching of RE in Rotherham and for her contribution to the Rotherham SACRE.

(2) That Mrs. Atkin be invited to be a guest speaker at the 2014/2015 REwards ceremony.

21. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETINGS.

Agreed: - (1) That the next meeting of the Rotherham SACRE take place on Tuesday 10th February, 2015, to start at 4.00 p.m. in the Rotherham Town Hall.

(2) That the summer term meeting of the Rotherham SACRE take place on a date in June, 2015, to coincide with the Childrens' Festival.