

## **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

**1<sup>st</sup> July 2021**

### **Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities**

#### **An Update on Key Issues**

#### **1 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To present members of SACRE with a brief update on key issues that have developed or arisen since the last meeting of SACRE.

#### **2 Summary**

2.1 Members of SACRE will receive a brief report on a number of key issues. These are matters which have either been raised at previous SACRE meetings and which have moved forward or matters on which it is appropriate to brief members of SACRE.

#### **3 Recommendation**

3.1 That members of SACRE receive the report and note the contents

#### **4 Background**

4.1 Since the Spring term meeting in February of the SACRE there have been developments in a number of areas which had previously been agenda items for SACRE or which have local or national importance for RE.

4.2 Members will be briefed on these key developments.

#### **5 Equal Opportunities**

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

#### **6 Financial implications**

6.1 Financial implications may be raised by individual items. These have been dealt with elsewhere or will be raised at future meetings of SACRE.

#### **Contact Officer**

**Mary Gale    07816374873**

**Key Issues Report July 1st 2021**

## **Westhill Legacy project- Explore, Engage, Reflect in conjunction with Youth Net**

This project continues to be halted due to Covid-19

## **Continuous Professional Development**

Schools were offered the opportunity to attend RE training through a virtual platform, no body took up the offer.

It is hoped that the offer will be taken up for the summer term.

Mary Gale has also been supporting RE leaders in schools through email.

This has involved supporting schools in understanding *greater depth* in RE assessment, whole class reading through RE texts, planning and preparation for Ofsted 'deep dives'.

Church of England schools have also asked for support with preparation for their next SIAMS inspection. Mary Gale has facilitated this.

## **Update on Sacred Spaces/ Christianity The Big Picture work in conjunction with Youth net**

This project has now been put on hold until autumn 2021 due to Covid-19

## **Support for Collective Worship**

This resource is now complete and is ready to be sent to schools to support them for the start of the new academic year.

## **Agreed Syllabus review- Please see agenda item 6**

Mary Gale through the Governor Information Pack has invited comments from governors, leaders and staff about the current Agreed Syllabus. Schools have been invited to respond through email to Mary. One school requested a face-to-face meeting to put forward their thoughts. This took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> June. Seven more schools have expressed an interest in supporting the review.

Mary Gale emailed SCC and Entrust to explore ways in which the LA could be supporting the AS review. This resulted in a teams meeting and a request for a business case to be put together by Mary Gale on how this could be achieved within the constraints of current budgets. To be discussed in agenda item 6.

## **NASACRE Conference and ARIEAC update**

Mary Gale attended the NASCARE virtual annual conference on May 24th 2021 with the Chair of Staffordshire SACRE- Michael Metcalf. See separate agenda item 5.

## **AREIAC virtual meeting**

Mary Gale attended the virtual meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Topics for discussions continue to centre around the following:-

### **Starter activity:**

Members present were invited to consider the words spoken by Pope Francis on the 6 Mar 2021, "Hostility, extremism and violence are not born of a religious heart. They are betrayals

of religion.” Pope Francis 6 March 2021. How might these words form the basis of a valuable RE lesson which encouraged young people to be aware of contemporary events in the world? What might be an appropriate, or perhaps provocative question, that young people could suitably be invited to discuss?

**REQM** The online assessment process

### **The Five Cities Project of the Religion Media Centre**

The meeting was told this project initiated by the “Religion Media Centre” which fact checks and seeks to help the media be better informed when reporting on religion and worldviews in the UK. Their intention is to provide an opportunity for faith communities to meet journalists and other media professionals in Leicester, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds and Plymouth and that these meetings will take place in the autumn.

### **Behind the classroom wall: the power structures that hold reform back**

The meeting discussed the website, “Reforming RE: A blogspace for a Worldview Curriculum”. <https://reformingre.wordpress.com/> The site contains over 30 blogs written by a range of RE professionals. BM described some of the ideas, language and principal views reflected in Mark Chater’s blog, “*Behind the classroom wall; the power structures that hold reform back*”. Mark’s main claim is that there is a power structure in RE which holds the subject back. This power is held by faith and belief groups that exert influence on policy, curriculum and resources. To illustrate this point it is reported that pupils are asked to respond to questions that assume a religious interest, e.g. “How do Christians live out their belief in the resurrection?” “What questions would you want to ask God?” The meeting recognised that the blog made points with which there was some agreement. However, the view was also expressed that the blog lacked nuance and failed to recognise the contribution SACREs made both to the development of the subject and in limiting undue central government interference. The blog made use of questionable analogies and vague assertions which lacked detail making them difficult to verify

### **The Worldview paradigm**

A bullet pointed summary of the views of supporters of the “worldview paradigm” and of criticisms of the proposal was tabled. Participants at the meeting shared their views and thoughts. Mention was made of the four documents released by the REC, of the three online seminars and of a CofE seminar. Mention was also made of the criticisms made by Philip Barnes of the worldview paradigm. Expressions of doubt were expressed about the claim that the Worldview paradigm was a “game changing” departure from the “religion paradigm”, the lack of clarity in statements like “opens up new ways of studying religion and belief” were made as were of crowding an already overcrowded curriculum. The “disciplinary” three-legged stool was mentioned as was the Staffordshire, explore, engage and reflect approach. The benefits of teaching “Fewer things in greater depth” and of specifying in more detail content was also mentioned

**Next meeting** Mary Gale will attend this meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021. A report will be provided in the November meeting.