

Minutes of the inaugural meeting of the Kent Youth SACRE held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday 16 October 2013 at 2pm.

Present:

Representatives from the following schools/Academies:

Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, Borden Grammar School, The Community College, Whitstable, Fulston Manor School, Hartsdown Technology College, The Harvey Grammar School, Maidstone Girls Grammar School, Maidstone Grammar School, Mayfield Grammar School, Gravesend, The Marsh Academy, The North School, Oakwood Park Grammar School, St. George's CE foundation School, Broadstairs, Weald of Kent Grammar School, Wilmington Grammar School for Girls.

SACRE Members:

Mr S Manion (Chairman) Mrs N Younosi (Vice-Chairman) Mrs K Burke, Mrs P Fairchild, Mrs J Grant, Mr T Maddison, Mrs V Thornewell, Mr R Tyson (Youth SACRE co-ordinator) Mrs J Wigg.

In Attendance:

Mrs C Wade. (Democratic Services officer)

1. Introduction/Welcome

Mr Manion welcomed all parties to the Council Chamber for the inaugural meeting of the Kent Youth SACRE.

2. Agenda

Mr Tyson allocated a discussion topic to each of the three Groups as follows:-

- A) Why RE is important-a student perspective -(Mrs Younosi lead)
- B) What RE has helped me to understand and achieve -(Mrs Wigg lead)
- C) What helps students learn and make progress in RE -(Mr Tyson lead)

Mr Tyson asked Groups to move to the syndicate rooms and after refreshment return to the Council Chamber to report/share their views.

3. Group A-Why RE is important-a student perspective

Students felt RE was a very important subject and valued for University application. RE study enabled:-

understanding of other cultures/traditions/religious perspective

took away misconceptions in a multi faith society

promoted understanding

broke myths

created tolerance/understanding - only few radicals, same as any groups enabled choice ie if parents atheist, allow student broaden own faith/belief through knowledge

tackled ignorance/prejudice through naivety no excuse-learning through RS can dispel.

Skills developed through RS-debate/respect not learnt in other subjects as no right or wrong answers/subjective.

Group much appreciated the opportunity to be heard and felt valued.

4.Group B-What RE has helped me to understand and achieve.

Students gave the following as their recipe for success:-

R=Respect -Valuing others' rights to expressing their own views.

E=Evaluation –RE helps you to weigh up different points of view and come to own conclusion.

L=Life – Skills that can help you in the future.

I=Individuality-actions understood by their belief.

G=God

I=Imagination

O=Opinions-other people's views, these challenge and strengthen your own and help to appreciate others and are non-judgemental as are completely personal.

U=Understanding – help acknowledge and accept the ever growing multicultural diversity through out Britain. Understand how different religions stem from each other and if different personal religious journeys lead to the same outcome in the afterlife.

S=Spirituality-RE opens your mind to be more spiritual and gives you time for reflection.

E= Equality –everyone's view point respected equally.

D=Diversity –cultures and religions within the wider community/GB increasingly diverse-RE helps understand these changes.

U=Unity

C=Challenge-RE is a challenging academic subject.

A=Attitudes-to change and become more mature.

T=Tolerance-accept and appreciate different people-its good to be different.

I=Integration-in today's multicultural society different cultures have to integrate.

O=Openness-having a broad mind when considering other peoples' perspective.

N=Network- RE helps you understand the community you live in.

5.Group C-What helps students learn and make progress in RE.

Students considered in four sections;

Need to learn

Teachers passionate and contribute more than just syllabus

RS not defined by bullet points

Make subject more human

Students felt RS should be approached differently for younger students in Years 7-9, lessons be more creative, include art/craft, music, poetry, rap, dance, role play, video, story, food tasting for different faiths etc. Trips to faith venues, ie Gurdwara, Gravesend, including study vacations ie Rome.(it was noted not all schools could afford expensive trips) Invite speakers to school. Debate/engage from beginning-not just note taking. Explanation of use/purpose, strengths and positives of RS how extend/enhance abilities in all other subjects.

In higher years exam preparation helpful, past papers/break down what is expected and crucial feed-back. Identify different methods and techniques of learning. PEE (point, evidence, explanation)
Timetable-increase numbers of lessons through years, not double periods as concentration lapses.

6. Mr Tyson thanked all Groups for their positive contributions and invited further open discussion which included;- debate on critical thinking: RS as an academically valued subject-not just fun: Skills acquired last a lifetime: balance between fun and exam course: Stigma attached to studying RE-need to sell in more positive light/some students felt no stigma at their school/achieved good results and subject academically recognised: rebrand fight against science-divergent thinking:

7. Mr Tyson advised that feedback forms would be emailed to all participating schools and the results, coupled with the minutes of the topics discussed would be used to develop RE across the County.

8. The minutes of the meeting would be included in the next SACRE Agenda in November and accessible on the web. Attendees would be emailed the link.

9. Mrs Younosi thanked all participants, including the Local Authority for its hospitality and said she had learnt a lot. It had been a privilege to listen to the views of such enthusiastic young people.

The meeting closed at 5pm.