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STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 6 JULY 2015

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Present:

Group A – Christian Denominations

Suzanne Dawson

Group A - Other Religions

Anas al-Korj, Harmeet Singh Brar, Elizabeth Jenkerson, David Vane

Group B – Church of England

Rev Duncan Jennings, Allan King

Group C - Teachers

Jackie Meering, David Parrott

Group D - Members of the Council

Councillor Brian Parnell, Kate Martin

Co-opted Members

Chris Davis

Also in attendance:

Alison Philpott – Professional Advisor

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

RESOLVED that Jackie Meering be appointed as Chair for the remainder of the municipal year.

JACKIE MEERING IN THE CHAIR

The SACRE agreed not to elect a Vice-Chair at this meeting.

2. **WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND CHANGES OF MEMBERSHIP**

Apologies were received from:

Group A - Margaret Blake, Priti Dave

Group B - Richard Wharton

Group C - Julian Waterfield

Group D - Councillor Warwick Payne

The SACRE noted that Councillor Payne had been appointed to Group D at the first Council meeting of the municipal year and that Councillor Paffey was no longer a member of the Council (and thus the SACRE) following the May 2015 elections.

3. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2015 be agreed as a correct record.

4. **FEEDBACK ON EVENTS**

Elizabeth Jenkerson (EJ) provided feedback on the NASACRE Annual Conference / AGM at which the keynote speaker was Charles Clarke former Secretary of State for Education.

SACRE members were reminded of the link to the report, 'A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools', by Charles Clarke and Linda Woodhead released recently.

<http://www.reonline.org.uk/news/a-new-settlement-religion-and-belief-in-schools/>

It was reported that recommendations in the report regarding RE in schools included abolishing collective worship and introducing a national syllabus with a similar legal status to other subjects in the National Curriculum. Regarding the latter, it was reported that an advisory group consisting of AREIAC, the RE Council and other interested parties had been formed to consider what should go into a national syllabus from which, it was also recommended, the right of parents to withdraw their children from the Religious Education part of the curriculum should be abolished. There were also a number of recommendations regarding faith schools. It was reiterated that the report was part of a national debate of RE in schools and that the recommendations might not therefore ever be implemented.

(Link to the relevant NASACRE webpage for more information on the NASACRE Conference:

<http://www.nasacre.org.uk/conference-and-agm/2015>)

5. **DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT**

The SACRE considered the draft Annual Report for August 2014-July 2015.

The Chair and members welcomed the draft report as the first to have been produced for some time and indicative of the renewed activity of the SACRE.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the draft Annual Report for August 2014-July 2015 be approved subject to amendments to section 7 to reflect activities undertaken in connection with the school monitoring visits, collective worship and teaching of RE; and
- (ii) that under the terms of the SACRE Constitution, the amended report be made available for public inspection and circulated to NASACRE and the relevant government department.

6. **SCHOOLS AUDIT TOOLS**

Alison Philpott gave a verbal update on the findings from the returns of the Audit Tools of RE circulated to a number of City schools earlier in the year.

Members were reminded that the Audit had been undertaken to provide the SACRE with the latest picture of RE in schools and thus inform future support work of the SACRE.

A table setting out the results was provided which clearly identified 'resources' together with 'staff development' as priority areas.

Members discussed the issue of resources management including possible funding sources for SACRE activities / projects and focussed on NASACRE's annual Westhill award scheme.

It was agreed that Alison submit an application for funding to the Westhill award scheme for an 'Increasing Respect of Difference' film / roadshow project to tour Southampton schools with a speaker from a local faith based group or RE specialist teacher under the management of SACRE. It was agreed that the details of the project be worked up by AP then circulated to SACRE members for comment before submission of the final bid.

It was also agreed that SACRE members submit information to the SACRE clerk for inclusion into a resource directory for schools.

#### 7. **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP PILOT VISITS - DRAFT PROTOCOL**

The SACRE considered the draft Protocol for SACRE monitoring visits to schools and feedback was provided regarding the pilot visits to schools as regards collective worship.

It was reported that a second school visit had been made – in this instance to a primary school.

Findings had included that the ethos and approach of the school had been very strong despite there being no daily act of collective worship. The UNICEF rights respecting principles ran through the school and cross-curriculum. The school had its own RE resources and additionally used those available on-line and provided support to non RE staff.

The previous secondary school visited was also felt to have a similarly strong approach with all those taking the GCSE taking the long course version.

The schools were felt to have benefited from the opportunity to respond to requests for advice and discuss relevant issues. It was stressed that the pilot was not expected to throw up bad practice as participating schools were unlikely to have put themselves forward if this were the case.

Further updates on monitoring visits would be provided to the SACRE at future meetings.

RESOLVED that the Draft Protocol for SACRE monitoring visits be approved.

#### 8. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS - DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

##### Ofsted Reports

It was reported that of the 14 completed inspections in the City, 85% were in the 'Good' or 'Outstanding' categories.

### Agreed Syllabus

Alison reported that eight attendees had confirmed for the open meeting to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> July for schools to contribute to the review of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Sufficient SACRE members had already volunteered to assist at the event but the invitation remained open.

### Forthcoming Events

The SACRE were informed of the South East England Faith Forum (SEEFF) AGM Conference Event on The Role of Faith in British Schools/Education. Alison Philpott agreed that the SACRE budget would be able to support attendance of up to four members. Details and the booking form to be circulated by the Clerk.

The SACRE discussed the issue of the increasing incidents of race crime in the City as raised by Harmeet Singh-Brar who reported that during May-June this year 25 incidents had been reported to the Sikh Council – it was acknowledged that such incidents were often not reported to the Police and not taken up by the local press. Following their expressions of concern members were asked to submit suggestions on how SACRE could support schools to combat this and other issues discussed, to AP by 9<sup>th</sup> July in order that these could possibly be incorporated into the funding bid to the Westhill award scheme.

### Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting be held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2015 at 4pm in the Civic Centre.