
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2015

Present:

Group A – Christian Denominations

None

Group A - Other Religions

Elizabeth Jenkerson, Harmeet Singh Brar, David Vane

Group B – Church of England

Rev Duncan Jennings, Richard Wharton

Group C - Teachers

Jackie Meering, David Parrott, Julian Waterfield

Group D - Members of the Council

Councillors Edward Daunt, Satvir Kaur, Brian Parnell,

Co-optees

Chris Davis, Suzanne Underwood

Also in attendance:

Alison Philpott – Professional Advisor

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

Apologies were received from:

Group A - Anas Al-korj, Margaret Blake, Priti Dave, Suzanne Dawson

Group B - Allan King, Rev Jeff Williams

Group D - Councillor Warwick Payne, Kate Martin

Co-optees - Liz Mizon

It was noted that Councillor Kaur had been appointed to the SACRE following the resignation of Councillor Denness.

The Chair thanked those present for attending and reminded members of the importance of ensuring meetings were quorate and thus able to make decisions.

10. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

RESOLVED that Councillor Daunt be appointed as Vice-Chair for the remainder of the municipal year.

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

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 6th July 2015 be agreed as a correct record.

12. **ANNUAL REPORT**

It was noted that the Annual Report for August 2014-July 2015, having been approved subject to amendments at the previous meeting, had been circulated to NASACRE and the relevant statutory bodies.

13. **SACRE ACTION PLAN**

The SACRE considered the development of an Action Plan for future SACRE activity.

It was suggested that there be a focus of three to five priorities in the Plan which would include the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) / Review and Monitoring of collective worship (CW) and teaching of Religious Education (RE) in schools.

Members also agreed that the 'Increasing Respect of Difference' film / roadshow project should form one of the priorities.

As a point of information, it was reported that the application for funding to the Westhill / NASACRE Award scheme had been unsuccessful and that feedback on the application, whilst requested, had not yet been received.

The SACRE agreed that a further funding bid to Culham St Gabriel's (<http://www.cstg.org.uk/about-us/>) be made with a view to achieving funding for the project.

The SACRE was keen to have sufficient funding in place for development work with schools to maximise the opportunities for engagement and support for schools (evidenced as being needed in review) when following the ASC and resulting changes to the Agreed Syllabus.

The importance of networking opportunities within RE was noted – including development and information exchange. There was discussion around the possible development of a SACRE webpage / newsletter for schools.

The SACRE agreed that a working group was needed to give adequate consideration to the proposals for the Action Plan raised during discussion and to formally populate the draft Plan.

Membership of the Action Plan Group was confirmed as: Chris Davis, Jackie Meering, Alison Philpott, Richard Wharton and David Vane (particularly with regard to media support and SCOF links).

RESOLVED

- (i) That a working group be established to take proposals regarding the draft Action Plan forward; and
- (ii) That the formalised Action Plan be brought back for approval to the SACRE at the November meeting.

14. **VISITS TO SCHOOLS**

Alison Philpott and members of the working group gave a verbal update to the SACRE on the progress of visits undertaken to monitor collective worship and RE teaching in schools in the City.

It was reported that two school visits had been completed - to one primary and one secondary school. Alison Philpott suggested a target of around 8-10 school visits in the academic year but it was recognised that the size of the Monitoring Group would dictate the number of visits that could be undertaken – more volunteers were needed.

As previously agreed by the SACRE and incorporated into the protocol for school visits, the working group had sight of the reports but individual schools would not be named in the main SACRE meetings.

It was reported that:

- daily collective worship (CW) had been a challenge for both schools mainly due to accommodation issues. It was expected that this would prove to be an issue for many schools. The working group would be working with the schools on how this statutory requirement could be met.
- Neither school had had requests for removal from CW.
- Both schools had provided a good range of evidence and panel of children for interview.
- Both had provided good examples of student led reflection and been strong on universal values work. It was recognised that as the schools had put themselves forward for the pilot visits they were unlikely to be examples of bad practise. However, the working group had been heartened by the results.
- More visits were expected to materialise from the head teachers' meeting later in the week (16th October) and there were three requests already in the pipeline.

Key points from the subsequent discussion included:

- In response to the question as to how many schools offered RE – it was noted that 30% of respondents to the Audit did so which was considered quite a high proportion
- It was acknowledged that RE was not always designated as such by name so the offer could in fact be higher
- Whether the SACRE should attempt to monitor academies – it was confirmed that academies had been included in the invitations for monitoring, some academies did use the Agreed Syllabus which was an additional reason for such a visit and it was reiterated that the SACRE's responsibility was for all children in the City
- Regarding performance information, it was noted that GCSE results would be available for the next meeting and suggested that the results be used as an indicator for monitoring visits and also that monitoring visits could possibly also address academic performance.

The process for monitoring was outlined as: observation of Collective Worship and an RE class; interviewing a panel of students, providing feedback to the Headteacher / Head of RE.

Membership of the Monitoring Group was confirmed as: Elizabeth Jenkerson, Reverend Jennings, Kate Martin, Jackie Meering, Councillor Parnell, Harmeet Singh-Brar and Julian Waterfield.

15. **AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE**

A brief verbal update on the progress of the review of the locally Agreed Syllabus was provided.

It was reported that a second review meeting had been held and that the writing group would thus proceed with a view to the revised syllabus being available for presentation to schools in line with the schedule for the launch and its presentation.

16. **FEEDBACK ON EVENTS**

The South East England Faith Forum Conference on 3rd September regarding “The Role of Faith in British Schools/Education” had been attended by Alison Philpott, Chris Davis, Elizabeth Jenkerson and Richard Wharton.

It was reported that the conference had considered the potential substantial changes in RE in schools as indicated in the Charles Clarke and Linda Woodhead report “A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools” (per previous minutes). NB: These are just proposals - not out for consultation.

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

Workshops at the conference had included topics such as: Faith Schools, The Role of SACREs; RE in multi-faith schools; the role of school governors and RE; preventing radicalisation in schools, and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development (SMSC).

17. **DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

RESOLVED that the next meeting be held on 23rd November 2015 at 4pm in the Civic Centre.

Any suggestions regarding agenda items to be sent to Alison Philpott for 9th November.