

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – Meeting held on Wednesday, 11th February, 2009 at Iqra Slough Islamic Primary School, Wexham Road.

Present:-

Committee 1 – Christian Denominations and Other Faiths

Soofi Mohammad Afzal – Islam
Sue Elbrow – Free Churches
Jo Osborne – Judaism

Committee 2 – Church of England

Rev Andrew Allen
Jo Fageant
Christine Isles

Committee 3 – Representatives of Teacher Associations

Lil Abdo – Professional Association of Teachers (Chair)
Kevin Marsh – National Union of Teachers

Committee 4 – Representatives of the LEA

Councillor Diana Coad
Councillor Mewa Mann

Also Present: - Jamila Fernandez (Head of Iqra Islamic School), Bill Alexander (Assistant Director, Raising Achievement) and Shabana Kauser (Clerk).

Apologies for Absence:- Rev Alan Bignell and Councillors S K Dhaliwal and O'Connor.

PART I

9. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th October 2008 were approved as a correct record.

10. Matters Arising

None.

11. Update on Shared SACRE Support

Bill Alexander (Assistant Director, Raising Achievement) updated Members with regard to shared SACRE support with other Berkshire Boroughs. It was highlighted that due to the severe budgetary constraints at Slough Borough

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Council, additional funding to provide support and assistance to SACRE was highly unlikely to be forthcoming. However, Members were informed that as an alternative to shared services, support could be provided by Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) funds. It was noted that Wexham Secondary School currently employed a teacher who taught religious education and who had AST training. Proposals to approach the teacher and investigate the possibility of setting up a network for RE teachers were welcomed.

Jo Fageant stated that although the Borough Council contributed funds towards the Joint SACRE Conference, the Borough was rarely represented at the event. A number of Members indicated that they would be willing to attend provided the date of the conference was informed to them in advance. It was agreed that Members would be informed of the date of the Joint Conference as soon as it was known.

12. Youth SACRE

The Chair informed the meeting that a SACRE Youth Council had been established in Surrey, where pupils from various schools were invited to comment on issues set by SACRE. It was noted that this served as a very useful tool in setting the agenda for the religious education syllabus.

Members welcomed the concept of a Youth Council, stating that it would raise the profile of religious education amongst young people. Queries relating to the logistics of establishing such a body were raised and the Chair stated that she would bring information relating to the Surrey Youth Conference to the next meeting. Bill Alexander informed the meeting that the Council employed two Participation Development Officers who worked closely with schools in the Borough and that they may be able to provide suggestions as to how best to develop the initiative. It was suggested that there could be a possibility of funding for the conference from the NASACRE/Westhill Awards for young inter-faith projects. It was noted that this would be explored further.

Resolved -

- (a) That the Participation Development Officers be invited to the next meeting of SACRE; and
- (b) That the possibility of funding for the Youth Council from NASACRE/Westhill be investigated.

13. Any Other Business

Membership: Bill Alexander informed the meeting that Annie Keighley, Senior Adviser, Standards and Achievements, Education and Children's Services, would attend future SACRE meetings.

Newspaper Article: Christine Isles brought to Members' attention a recent newspaper article which reported that a foster carer had been struck off after a Muslim girl in her care had converted to Christianity. The general consensus of the meeting was that politics and religion should be kept separate.

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(Councillor Mann left the meeting)

Future Venue for the Religious Education Centre: Jamila Fernandez, Headteacher of IQRA, reminded members that the school would be locating to its new premises in November 2009. It was noted that the Trustees of the RE Centre would need to approach the governing body of IQRA with regard to locating the Centre at the new site. Discussion also ensued with regard to the overall budget for SACRE and the fact that £1,200 was allocated for rent for the Centre. Bill Alexander stated that alternative options of funding for the rent would be investigated, including whether funding should be provided from the schools budget. It was agreed that the issue would be presented to a future meeting of the Schools Forum.

14. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 10th June, 2009 at 4.30 p.m. Venue to be confirmed.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 4.30 p.m. and closed at 5.35 p.m.)