

**Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education – Meeting held on Wednesday, 6th June, 2007 at the Town Hall, Bath Road, Slough.**

**Present:- Committee 1 - Christian Denominations and Other Faiths**

Sue Elbrow - The Free Churches  
Latif Khan - Islam  
Jo Osborne - Judaism

**Committee 2 - Church of England**

Rob Davey  
Christine Isles

**Committee 3 - Representatives of Teacher Associations**

Lil Abdo - Profesional Association of Teachers (Chair)  
Kevin Marsh - National Union of Teachers

**Committee 4 - Representatives of the LEA**

Councillor Mohammed Aziz  
Councillor Brian Hewitt  
Councillor David Maclsaac

**Also present:-** Bill Alexander (Assistant Director, Raising Achievement)  
Kevin Barrett (Clerk))

**Apologies for Absence:-** Alan Bignell, Dr Igan Hayati, Naresh Pandit and Maggie Stacey.

**PART 1**

**21. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 7th February, 2007.**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2007 were approved as a correct record.

**22. Matters Arising**

Slough RE Centre

Bill Alexander updated the meeting on the current position with regard to the possible relocation of the RE Resource Centre following the redevelopment of the Lea Schools to establish a new Muslim faith school. It now appeared that a relocation to the new Beechwood School was highly unlikely for logistical reasons and he reminded Members that the sponsors of the new Muslim faith school had kindly offered to accommodate the Centre within the new building. At the present

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time, negotiations were ongoing in this regard and it was hoped that a satisfactory solution would be achieved.

He also cautioned that it may be difficult to find alternative provision in the Borough for the Centre, there did not appear to be any accommodation available in any of the town's secondary schools and it may be necessary to consider whether any of the primary schools had suitable accommodation.

A short discussion ensued on possible alternative locations for the RE Centre, including the possibility of its relocation to the central library and, subsequently, to the new library once developed. Roy Davey also undertook to look into the possibility of there being any church premises available in the town which may be able to accommodate the Centre.

Jo Osborne was asked whether the relocation of the facility within a Muslim faith school would cause any difficulties. Her view was that, provided the location was acceptable and accessible to RE staff, then the location was a secondary issue. She also pointed out that the Centre was a charity and the artefacts it contained had been paid for by the funding provided to that charity. Accordingly, it would not be possible for the artefacts to simply be "given away" to schools as an alternative to re-providing the Centre.

Bill Alexander confirmed that he would be meeting the Trustees of the RE Centre again in the near future but that the matter was currently with them for consideration. He understood however that the offer to accommodate them in the new school was still on the table and Latif Khan confirmed that this was the case.

### Professional Support to the SACRE

A Member enquired as to what professional support was currently available to schools in Slough for the delivery of the new agreed syllabus, etc. It was pointed out that it was up to individual schools to contact the LEA if it required support and Roy Davey confirmed that, as of September, Jo Fageant's capacity to assist would be increased as her role at the Diocese was changing. This was welcomed by the SACRE. It was noted that any support purchased would need to be met from the school's budget.

### Induction Course for SACRE Members

Christine Isles reported that she had attended this course recently along with approximately 20 other SACRE Members from around Berkshire. She had found it very useful and outlined what had been covered.

It was noted that one issue that had arisen was a lack of knowledge amongst school governors about the existence of SACREs and it was suggested that it may be useful for the Governors Support Officer at the Borough Council to highlight the annual report to governing bodies. It was noted that, in Slough, there were no subject specific governors as there were in certain other areas but that the governing body as a whole had the responsibility for ensuring that all parts of the curriculum were properly delivered, including RE. The suggestion that the SACREs' profile

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could be heightened by providing governing bodies with additional information and a copy of the annual report would be followed up, although it was noted that a copy was already sent to Slough schools. Bill Alexander pointed out that there had been no issues arising at Slough schools in respect of recent inspection reports as far as RE and collective worship were concerned.

### Joint Berkshire SACREs Conference 2007

It was confirmed that this Conference was taking place on Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> June at East Hampstead Park Conference Centre and invitations had recently been circulated to SACRE Members.

## **23. Questionnaire to Schools - Feedback on Outcomes.**

The meeting had before it the feedback on the questionnaire sent to all Slough schools following the last meeting seeking information about RE in schools and a view on whether additional training, etc would be welcomed. The response had been somewhat disappointing with only 15 schools (approximately 30%) responding despite reminders.

Given the low level of response and the lack of any clear call for termly meetings of RE co-ordinators, etc. the general view of the meeting was the only outcome that should be pursued was the possible delivery of some form of training on an annual basis meeting some of the training needs identified. It was noted that Jo Fageant carried out a very well received course for new co-ordinators and it may be possible for the SACRE to sponsor the delivery of a course aimed specifically for new RE staff which covered some of the issues identified in the questionnaire but which could also be used as a refresher course for existing staff. It was essential however that the content of the training met the needs of RE staff in the town and would have to be carefully constructed to meet them.

It was generally felt that there was not sufficient support identified for the establishment of termly meetings which would probably not be particularly well attended.

Bill Alexander added that the training day could have a two fold purpose in increasing the knowledge generally of the Slough syllabus and related issues as well as providing information for co-ordinators on how to carry out their role.

Mr Davey suggested that it might be helpful to invite governors to take part in the training to increase their knowledge.

In respect of one of the other points raised in the survey, Jo Osborne noted that it would not be possible without additional funding to deliver .....to schools.

With regard to the issue of visits to places of worship by school groups, it was noted that much of this information could be gleaned from the internet, as could certain of the other information requested. More important was the apparent lack of

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knowledge on areas such as target setting and levels which could usefully be picked up in the training.

### **Agreed -**

- (a) That the outcome of the questionnaire be noted and that arrangements be put in hand for a training day to be organised for RE co-ordinators focusing on the key issues arising and also serving the purpose of acting as a refresher course for enlisting co-ordinators.
- (b) That consideration also be given to inviting governors to attend.

### **24. SACRE News (Enclosed for SACRE Members).**

Copy of the latest edition of SACRE news was circulated for information.

### **25. Proposed Dates of Future Meetings -**

It was agreed that the next meeting be held on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2007 and the following one on Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2008. The next meeting could be held at the Council's Offices in The Centre, Farnham Road.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 4.30 pm and closed at 5.15 pm)