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Date of issue: 29th May, 2007

MEETING	STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
DATE AND TIME:	WEDNESDAY, 6TH JUNE, 2007 AT 4.30 PM
VENUE:	COMMITTEE ROOM 2, TOWN HALL, BATH ROAD, SLOUGH
CLERK (for all enquiries)	KEVIN BARRETT (01753) 875014

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are requested to attend the above Meeting at the time and date indicated to deal with the business set out in the following agenda.

CLERK

NOTE TO MEMBERS

This meeting is an approved duty for the payment of travel expenses.

AGENDA

PART I

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	Apologies for absence.		
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AGENDA
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WARD

4. SACRE News (Enclosed for SACRE Members).
5. Proposed Dates of Future Meetings -
Wednesday, 17th October, 2007
Wednesday, 17th February, 2008
6. Any Other Business

Press and Public

You are welcome to attend this meeting which is open to the press and public, as an observer. You will however be asked to leave before the Committee considers any items in the Part II agenda. Special facilities may be made available for disabled or non-English speaking persons. Please contact the Democratic Services Officer shown above for further details.

Minicom Number for the hard of hearing – (01753) 875030

**SLOUGH STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION –
Meeting held on Wednesday, 7th February, 2007 at the RE Resource Centre,
Lea Junior School, Grasmere Avenue.**

Present:-

Committee 1 – Christian Denominations and Other Faiths

Sue Elbrow – The Free Churches
Jo Osborne – Judaism

Committee 2 – Church of England

Rev Alan Bignell
Roy Davey
Christine Isles

Committee 3 – Representatives of Teacher Associations

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

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

Apologies for Absence:- Stephen O'Brien, Jo Fageant and Councillors Aziz, Bains
and P Choudhry.

15. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting held on 1st November, 2006 were approved
as a correct record.

16. Matters Arising

Slough RE Centre

Jo Osborne referred to the ongoing support of the LEA through the SACRE
for which the Centre was extremely grateful and the difficulties that would be
caused should this arrangement cease, with individual schools presumably
having to be requested to make a contribution top its running costs.

As regards the future of the RE Centre once the Muslim Faith School was
developed on the Lea Schools campus, Bill Alexander commented that he
was in negotiations with the Head Teacher of Beechwood School as to
whether they would be able to accommodate it within the new building. It
made sense for the resource to be placed in that location as the Professional
Development Centre and the new Resource Centre would be on that site,
hence leading to greater accessibility for teachers. He also advised that the
promoters of the new Muslim School were also keen for the Centre to be

located within their buildings and so there were two options. It was noted that the new Beechwood School would have separate entrances for pupils and visitors which could make it more suitable for the Resource Centre. It was however agreed that accessibility was the key to the future location.

Bill Alexander commented that, provided the budget was not cut, he could see no reason why the LEA should not continue to be able to support the Resource Centre for the foreseeable future.

School Inspections – Self-Evaluation Form

Bill Alexander reminded the meeting of the current statutory arrangements for self-evaluation by schools of their strengths and weaknesses, including in respect of the delivery of religious education. Roy Davey asked, given that RE and collective worship were statutory requirements, what were the current support mechanisms for schools to ensure that they were able to deliver these as required. Bill Alexander commented that, given that Slough was a relatively small LEA, it was not able to provide funding to support an RE Advisor to schools. However, all schools had been sent both a hard copy and a CD of the new agreed syllabus and should be utilising it. He further commented that monitoring could be carried out through the school termly visits but that the delivery of RE was not seen by the Government as being a high priority as compared to other core subjects. Where RE was considered to be an issue, the role of the local authority would be to provide information as to where a school could find the necessary support and expertise to assist it. It was agreed that, in its role of encouraging and promoting good practice in RE, the SACRE should formally request the LEA through the Officer to provide all schools with the necessary information.

Roy Davey agreed to speak to the Oxford Diocese to ascertain whether there was any further assistance the Diocese could be able to offer in this regard.

Agreed – That the LEA be formally requested to provide schools with information on sources of support and expertise on RE and collective worship.

17. Professional Support to the SACRE

The meeting discussed the current position whereby it had in past years made use of the professional support, through the Oxford Diocese, of Jo Fageant and, previously, Ruth Dearnley. Because of the extremely limited funding available to the SACRE, this equated to no more than two to three days of professional consultancy in the year and it was therefore important that best use was made of this resource. Bill Alexander suggested that the SACRE should be considering how best to make use of this very limited resource and whether to have Jo attending meetings was appropriate or whether she should be commissioned to undertake specific projects or deliver targeted training to RE staff in Slough schools. Members commented that it was important for the SACRE to have this expertise to call upon when many of its members were not RE specialists. It was however agreed that

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consideration should be given to the best way of making use of this limited resource.

Bill Alexander suggested two possible options. The Council made available to schools an “approved provider list” and it was suggested that she could be added to that list so that schools could call upon her where they wanted specific pieces of work done. Alternatively, a certain amount of Jo’s time could be negotiated to carry out specific pieces of work for the SACRE. He further suggested that one way forward might be for the SACRE to invite schools, through a questionnaire, to provide information on their training needs or other requirements in respect of RE so that an appropriate course could be delivered by Jo.

SACRE Members welcomed this suggestion and Jo Osborne agreed to forward a questionnaire to all schools seeking their views on what type of training, etc would prove most useful to RE co-ordinators. It was also felt that an opportunity for co-ordinators to meet together and network would be extremely useful, particularly for people who were not RE specialists as was the case in many schools. The issues arising from any such session could be reported back to the SACRE so that it could consider what further action, if any, was needed.

The type of information that could be collated from the questionnaire included up to date information on RE co-ordinators, training needs, how they best felt that this training could be delivered and whether they felt the calling of “cluster meetings” of co-ordinators would be welcomed. Hopefully it would then become clearer what input would be required from Jo Fageant so that her limited time was tailored to the specific requirements of RE co-ordinators in Slough.

It was noted that some of the information held by the RE Resource Centre on RE co-ordinators in Slough schools was out of date and a comment was made that, in many schools, the member of staff co-ordinating RE changed on a fairly regular basis. Accordingly, the circulation of a questionnaire at this stage would prove extremely useful to find the current contacts.

The meeting thanked Jo Osborne for volunteering to circulate the questionnaire and it was

Agreed - That arrangements be made for a questionnaire to be circulated to all RE co-ordinators in Slough schools seeking the information suggested and that the results be reported back to the SACRE at its June meeting for further consideration of how best to meet the needs identified.

18. Joint Berkshire SACREs Conference 2007

The Clerk advised that the 2007 Joint Berkshire SACREs Conference was taking place on Thursday, 28th June between 6.00 p.m. and 9.00 p.m. at Easthampstead Park Conference Centre. Mark Chater, the newly appointed

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Lead Officer for RE at the QCA would be speaking to the Conference, the title of which would be “The Future of Spirituality, Values and RE in a Changing Curriculum”.

19. Any Other Business

Induction Course for SACRE Members

The meeting was advised that plans were proceeding for the introduction of an induction course for SACRE Members. No specific date had yet been set for the course but current thinking was that it would probably take place on a Saturday morning. Further information would be provided as it was obtained.

RE Schemes of Work

The long promised schemes of work for RE had now been published on the RE subject section of the QCA website and Jo Fageant was alerting all teachers that she was in contact with about this.

New Muslim Faith School

Bill Alexander updated the meeting on the current position with regard to the provision of a Muslim Faith School on the Lea Schools campus which was due to open from September, 2008. He answered a number of questions of detail from SACRE Members.

20. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting was taking place on Wednesday, 6th June, 2007 at 4.30 p.m.

Chair

(The meeting opened at 4.30pm and closed at 5.25 p.m.)

Slough Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
Responses to Questionnaire

Copy of questionnaire as sent to all Slough schools attached.

To date, a total of 15 replies (approx. 30%) has been received from schools, 10 primary, 1 special primary and 5 secondary. The letter and questionnaire was originally sent to schools on 15th March. A reminder was sent to those not replying on 30th April.

In secondary schools all RE coordinators that responded are permanent. In primary schools all but one are permanent (RE coordinators have been in place from 1 to 15 years). The only temporary coordinator leaves the post at the end of this academic year.

All respondents have current copies of the 2006 syllabus. The catholic secondary schools noted they follow the syllabus suggested by the Diocese of Northampton.

Contact with other RE coordinators was seen as not particularly important by secondary school coordinators. The response from primary school coordinators was mixed, with half thinking it very useful.

Most coordinators would be prepared to attend regular meetings with other RE coordinators, with a termly basis seen as most appropriate. Others would attend depending on the agenda; two coordinators said they would definitely not attend.

Coordinators particularly felt that training on different faiths would be important, as would visits to religious sites. Many primary school coordinators also felt training on the role of the coordinator would be useful. One wanted training on target setting, one on creative ideas for the classroom and one on long term planning.

All primary coordinators and some secondary coordinators would welcome some support on collective worship. One Catholic school noted that this would need to be specific to Catholicism.

All coordinators except the one special school would be prepared to travel out of Slough, although some noted this was depended upon the content of training and the time.

Many respondents felt SACRE could help deliver better RE by having contacts for local religious believers and places of worship (perhaps provided over the internet), some would like recommended resources, teaching and learning on specific topics and lesson plans. One coordinator felt that more resources for delivering teaching on Christianity would be useful as current resource assumed a Christian basis.

All coordinators are aware of the Slough RE Resource Centre. The secondary coordinators rarely use it. Many primary coordinators have used it, generally on a termly basis.

Additional Comments from Secondary School Coordinators

'In your GCE results at AS level over the past couple of years you have documented only the number of students who do not continue to A2. We have at present 34 A2 candidates & 40 AS candidates.'

Additional Comments from Primary School Coordinators

'I enjoy being RE coordinator but teachers are often encouraged to take on responsibility for other subjects and the danger is that a lot of training/resources are invested in one person as RE coordinator and then that person moves on to a new job or to a different area of responsibility, so the training could then be wasted.'

'The new syllabus is obviously top priority at the moment, and the staff are trying hard to adapt to it

Further information and suggested useful resources/books/websites to support these would be gratefully received.'

'It would have been extremely useful if there could have been a way in which the resources from the Resource Centre could be delivered to schools if they book it out in advance.'

'A programme regarding issues RE coordinators may need help with, that could be delivered to staff at schools (INSET days or staff meetings).

- Rationale behind switch to new syllabus (for any disillusioned teachers or those not motivated to embrace change).
- Resources – people, artefacts, interactive whiteboard, etc.
- Staff visits to places of worship to preview/assess delivery of syllabus.
- Practical sessions with looking at tasks set that lead to different levels/sampling children's work.'

'I think as a SACRE we have benefited greatly from the input of Jo Fageant and Ruth Dearnley with their broad overall view of RE. Jo Fageant gave James Elliman 2 hours in service to introduce the new syllabus to us. Staff were very appreciative of her services.'

APPENDIX

15th March, 2007

Department: Law and Corporate Governance
Contact Name: Mr K Barrett
Contact No: 01753 875014
Fax: 01753 875171
Email: kevin.barrett@slough.gov.uk
Our Ref: KB/PMK

TO: RE Co-ordinators - All Slough Schools

Dear RE Co-ordinator,

**Slough Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education –
Questionnaire**

Slough SACRE has been reviewing its role and relevance to RE teaching in Slough and has agreed that it would be extremely useful to get first hand from RE practitioners in Slough schools more information on how it could better assist you in carrying out your role more effectively. To this end, I am enclosing a short questionnaire which you can either e-mail or post back to me seeking some basic information which will I hope help the SACRE to provide a better service to RE teachers in the town.

For those of you who are not familiar with the SACRE and its role, I am also attaching a copy of the last Annual Report for the 2005/06 school year.

I look forward to receiving the questionnaire back from you but if there are any other issues you wish to raise, please do not hesitate to contact me (contact details above).

Yours sincerely

Kevin Barrett
Democratic and Member Services

SLOUGH SACRE
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RE CO-ORDINATORS

Name of School

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I should be extremely grateful if you could complete the following questions and return this questionnaire to the address given below.

1. Please state the name of the school's current RE Co-ordinator and a telephone number/e-mail if different from the school's.

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2. How long have you been the RE Co-ordinator at the school?

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3. Are you the permanent Co-ordinator?

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4. If you are holding this position in a temporary capacity, how long is this likely to be for and does the school have plans to appoint a permanent RE Co-ordinator?

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5. Do you have your current copy of the new RE syllabus published in 2006 (paper copy and CD)?

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6. How important for you is contact with other RE teachers in Slough?

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7. Would you be prepared to attend a regular meeting with other RE Co-ordinators/ teachers in Slough and, if so, would a termly meeting be about right? If not, please state how often you think this would be useful.

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8. If the Slough SACRE were to provide in-service training for Slough RE teaching staff, what aspects would be most important to you? (e.g. the role of the RE Co-ordinator/training on particular faith traditions, etc.)?

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9. Would you welcome some professional advice and support (or possibly training) on collective worship?

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10. Would you be prepared to travel out of Slough (e.g. to South Bucks or to other authorities in Berkshire to take advantage of training opportunities?

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10. Are there any other ways in which you feel the Slough SACRE could help you to better deliver RE in your school?

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11. Are you aware of the Slough RE Resource Centre at Lea Junior School? If so, how often do you/your staff make use of it?

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Please feel free to add below any further comments that you wish to concerning the matters raised above which could be helpful in the SACRE's consideration of its future role.

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Please complete and return this questionnaire to kevin.barrett@slough.gov.uk or by post to Kevin Barrett, Clerk to the SACRE, Democratic Services, Town Hall, Bath Road, Slough SL1 3UQ. (Telephone No: Slough 875014)

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