

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education – Meeting held on Wednesday, 8th June, 2016.

Present:-

Committee 1 – Christian Denominations and Other Faiths

Julie Siddiqi, Waqar Bhatti, Sue Elbrow, Ashpreet Singh Nainu, and Hardip Singh Sohal

Committee 2 – Church of England

Christine Isles, Andrea Sparrow

Committee 3 – Representatives of Teacher Associations

Lynda Bussley, Linda Lewis

Committee 4 – Representatives of the LEA

Councillors Brooker and Sarfraz

Other:-

Jo Fageant – Professional Advisor & Robin Crofts – Director of Education

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Parmar, Zubayr Abbas-Bowkan & Rev. Andrew Allen

PART 1

1. Election of Chair & Vice Chair

It was moved by Waqar Bhatti, and seconded by Ashpreet Singh Nainu, that Julie Siddiqi be elected as Chair, and Lynda Bussley be elected as Vice Chair, for the municipal year 2016/17.

Resolved - That Julie Siddiqi be elected as Chair of SACRE for 2016/17.
That Lynda Bussley be appointed as Vice Chair of SACRE for the municipal year 2016/17.

(Ms Siddiqi in the Chair).

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting Held on 24th February 2016

Resolved - That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 24th February 2016, be approved as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising

None.

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4. SACRE Membership Update - Democratic Services

The Clerk introduced a summary of current SACRE Membership, highlighting the remaining vacancies to be filled. It was confirmed that Mr Robert Simpson had resigned from his role as member of SACRE, thereby leaving a vacancy within Committee 2 – the Church of England.

Christine Isles confirmed that potential interest had been received in respect of the Roman Catholic vacancy. Ms Isles agreed she would provide the interested party's contact details to the clerk and Ms Fageant for review.

5. SACRE Member News (An update from Members regarding activities undertaken since the last SACRE meeting) - Julie Siddiqi

Councillor Brooker confirmed that he had been named as Chairman of the Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Panel.

Jo Fageant, Professional Advisor, confirmed that the Church of England had commissioned a project to create resources for teaching about Christianity, designed to address the most recent Ofsted reports. It was hoped that in future, a similar project could be undertaken for all the major religions. The resources were being created by members of RE Today, and would be available once training had been completed (likely by the end of the Summer Term).

Julie Siddiqi highlighted this year's 'Big Iftar', being held at various sites including Coventry Cathedral. The Big Iftar is an initiative to invite people from all faiths to come and share the Iftar, a meal at a special time of day during Ramadan, when Muslims open their fast and give thanks for the food they are eating.

The question of whether children who received education at home were required to receive Religious Education was raised. It was confirmed that home schooled children must receive 'suitable' education, with no requirement to receive Religious Education specifically. It was expected that new guidance would be forthcoming within the next 12 months that may change this.

6. Open The Book - Andrea Sparrow

Andrea Sparrow updated members on the 'Open The Book' initiative.

It was confirmed that Open the Book is an initiative, created in 1999 by the Bible Society, which provides a three-year rolling programme of stories designed for weekly assemblies or collective worship, based on the Lion Storyteller Bible for children. The programme involves a small group of adults, often from a church or group of churches, committing to visit a school once per week during term time to present Bible stories. The programme has robust governance with a code of practice, volunteer and team leader role

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descriptions and agreements, the requirement for DBS checks, initial and ongoing training provision and ongoing support.

In 2014 primary schools in the area were contacted to determine whether any would be interested in using Open the Book. Of the schools contacted, two responded - one being Lent Rise (in Burnham, South Bucks). Currently Lent Rise School has rolled out the programme to Key Stage 2, overseen by two teachers who lead on collective worship.

Starting the programme in January 2015, the team comes into the school once per week, for five weeks each half term. Feedback from Lent Rise School has so far been positive, reporting that the team that comes into the school are friendly and professional with excellent story-telling and interaction skills, as well as well-defined boundaries. As the core team is largely unchanged week-on-week, the children see familiar faces and they have become a valuable part of the wider school community. The children say they enjoy sessions very much, and look forward to them.

In addition to quality of content, the teachers appreciate that the programme needs very little forward planning on their part. Following a session, time in class is provided for discussion, questions, and for children to share their own experiences. This is seen as a key opportunity to explore similar or resonant stories from other traditions, and any connections with current events or learning across the school. Open the Book has become an important, integrated part of school life at Lent Rise, and the school would recommend the initiative.

Members thanked Ms Sparrow for the information, and were enthused about the potential for Open The Book within Slough schools. It was agreed that the clerk would forward the relevant links to all SACRE members to review.

7. RE Resourcing Catalogue Project Update - Lynda Bussley

It was confirmed that the cataloguing project had yet to be undertaken.

It was agreed that Mrs Bussley would collect the resources from St. Mary's C of E School and bring these to Mr Bhatti, who would then photograph the items. In the long-term, it was agreed that the resources would remain at St. Mary's C of E School.

8. Joint SACRE Meetings Update - Jo Fageant

Jo Fageant, Professional Advisor to Slough SACRE, updated members on the outcome of a recent Joint SACRE meeting held in May 2016.

At the meeting, the Hub and Crossing the Bridges coordinator roles were discussed, and details of hub projects were agreed, as follows:

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Hub Coordinator role

- 9 working days, 3 days per term (April 2016-March 2017)
- 2-3 days to plan, administer and deliver the event/conference September 2016 (venue and refreshments paid for by SACREs or by funding gained through bids currently submitted)
- 3 days to plan, prepare, Chair and follow up the 3 termly meetings (first one held 18/5/16)
- 1 day to write and follow up Westhill/NASACRE bid for a 2016-17 award to enhance the Crossing the Bridges Project
- 1 day to write agreed syllabus review tool/process to bring to Hub meeting Spring term 2017
- 1-2 days as yet unallocated

Crossing the Bridges Coordinator role

- 6 working days, 2 per term (April 2016-March 2017)
- 1.5 days to prepare and deliver presentation 30/6/16 at Culham St Gabriel's Conference in Birmingham
- 0.5 day Write Crossing the Bridges Project Plan
- 1 day to manage/edit the teacher work on the Directory
- 1 day to finalise and edit the Directory
- 1 day to collate feedback from schools and hosts and write report for SACREs
- 1 day to organise publicity for project to schools, hosts etc.

Teacher time to work on Directory April 2016- March 2017

- 6 working days at £200 per day
- 5 days to work on Directory
- 1 day to collate feedback to inform project

Training

- 1 day preparation and 2 days' delivery of host/teacher training for the Crossing the Bridges Project

Total

- 9 days Hub coordinator
- 6 days Crossing the Bridges coordinator
- 3 days host/teacher training
- 18 days @ £500 = £9,000
- 6 days teacher time = £1,200
- Total for both roles/projects for the Hub: £10,200
- Total per SACRE - £1,700

At the previous meeting, Slough SACRE had agreed to contribute £1,900 towards the work of the Joint SACRE Hub. As such, the £1,700 required is

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within the budget agreed, and the remaining £200 will be retained for Slough's SACRE budget. It was confirmed that all 6 SACREs had committed to the above projects. Each SACRE will be invoiced by Wokingham Borough Council at the end of each term.

With regard to the Places of Worship directory, it was agreed that all SACRE Members will forward details of suitable venues, including point of contact details and a risk assessment, to Jo Fageant on the appropriate forms.

9. NASACRE AGM - Verbal Update - Jo Fageant

Jo Fageant, Professional Advisor to Slough SACRE, tabled the minutes of the recent NSACARE AGM held on Tuesday 17th May 2016.

It was confirmed that there were several speakers throughout the day, covering topics such as 'Religion and Belief in British Public Life'. Members noted the minutes.

10. Humanism in Religious Education - Jo Fageant

Jo Fageant, Professional Advisor, introduced a report on the teaching of Humanism within schools, following the High Court ruling made in November 2015.

It was confirmed that in November 2015, the High Court had ruled against the Department for Education, stating that statutory RE in schools without a religious character must teach about non-religious worldviews, and that this could include the teaching of Humanism.

Since the ruling, Slough had been contacted by the British Humanist Association (BHA), who had forwarded a breakdown of the ruling and offered advice for schools on how best to incorporate humanism into their syllabus. However, it was confirmed that the guidance offered by the BHA was not wholly correct. Currently, the teaching of non religious viewpoints was optional within the current GCSE curriculum, and members were therefore directed to review the DfE guidance on the ruling.

11. SACRE Action Plan 2016/17 - Jo Fageant

Jo Fageant, Professional Advisor, introduced the new Action Plan for the work of SACRE throughout 2016-17.

Members were informed that there remained a surplus of £1,300 carried over from the previous financial year. £200 would also be available following the revision of the contribution toward the work of the Joint SACRE Hub, from £1,900 to £1,700.

The half-day session on addressing radicalisation, to be run by Zafar Ali, was still to be arranged.

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12. Member's Attendance Record

The Member's Attendance Record was noted.

13. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the clerk would confirm the date of the next meeting to members via email. It was requested that the meeting be held on a Wednesday, during the last week of October 2016.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 4.40 pm and closed at 6.20 pm)