

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education – Meeting held on Wednesday, 6th October, 2021.

Present:-

Committee 1 – Christian Denominations and Other Faiths

Ashpreet Singh Nainu (Chair), Sue Elbrow, Waqar Bhatti, Shujah Hamid and Hardip Singh Sohal

Committee 2 – Church of England

Lynda Bussley (Vice-Chair), and Christine Isles

Committee 3 – Representatives of Teacher Associations

Munsoor Malik – Primary

Priya Lamba – Primary

Committee 4 – Representatives of the LEA

Councillors Basra, Brooker, Kaur and Smith

Officers in attendance:

David Rees – Professional Adviser

Jo Curd - Group Manager, School Effectiveness

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Begum, Rev Gordon Briggs and Ian Sharpe

42. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2021- 2022

Nominations were sought for the position of Chair and Vice-Chair for the next SACRE year.

Ashpreet Singh Nainu was proposed and seconded to serve as Chair and this unanimously agreed.

Lynda Bussley was proposed and seconded to serve as Vice-Chair and this was unanimously agreed.

Resolved:

- i) That Ashpreet Singh Nainu be elected as Chair for the 2021-2022 SACRE year.
- ii) That Lynda Bussley be elected as Vice-Chair for the 2021-2022 SACRE year.

43. Minutes of the Last Meetings held on 3 March and 17 June 2021

That the minutes of the meetings held on 3 March and 17 June 2021 be agreed as correct records subject to the minutes of the meeting held on 17 June being amended to note that Councillor Kaur was present.

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44. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

45. Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub Minutes of Meeting held on 6 September 2021

Members received the minutes of the Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub held on 6 September 2021. It was highlighted that the Agreed Syllabus review process, led by the Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub had started. The first stage of the review would begin with teacher consultation.

During discussion, the professional adviser (adviser) clarified that maintain stream schools were required to follow the locally agreed syllabus when teaching RE, but academies, free schools and voluntary aided schools could choose to follow either the locally agreed, or a different syllabus.

In response to a query raised as to whether faith schools were required to follow an agreed syllabus, the adviser would check and provide a response at the next meeting.

(Councillor Brooker lost internet connection)

The process for reviewing the Agreed Syllabus was noted to be time consuming and extensive, and it was acknowledged that Covid-19 would inevitably impact on the timeline of the review.

With regard to concerns as to how the locally Agreed Syllabus could be further improved to encourage all schools in Slough, the adviser explained that the purpose of the Agreed Syllabus was to ensure that the statutory requirements for teaching RE were covered. Although the current Agreed Syllabus provided schools with more choice, additional support would be required in the revision to enable delivery.

It was noted that the review would be steered by Anne Andrews, RE Adviser, Oxford Diocesan Board of Education.

In response to a query about which agreed syllabus was taught to children from Slough who attended maintained schools in other boroughs, it was explained that the schools in those boroughs would follow the locally agreed syllabus for that local authority. The Adviser added that whilst many schools may not follow their locally agreed syllabus, numerous schools had creative ways of teaching RE. Members noted that the key issue was in finding out whether schools were teaching RE.

Resolved – That the Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub Minutes of Meeting held on 6 September 2021 be noted.

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46. Autumn 2021 SACRE RE Newsletter

The adviser presented the Autumn 2021 SACRE RE newsletter and highlighted upcoming events listed, including the Interfaith Week from 14 – 21 November 2021 and the Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January 2022.

It was noted that newsletter would be circulated to all schools via TheLink education website. The deadline for submission of items for the next newsletter was confirmed as December 2021.

Resolved – That the Autumn 2021 SACRE RE Newsletter be noted.

47. SACRE Action Plan 2021 - 2022

The adviser introduced the SACRE draft Action Plan for the updated period to September 2021.

It highlighted that the next NASACRE conference would be taking place in person in Birmingham in May 2022. Further details would be provided once they were available.

Teachers had welcomed the support that had been provided at the termly RE Network meetings and had appreciated the added resources materials provided. Reviving the Crossing the Bridges project was included as one of the proposed areas for further support.

Members noted that additional videos relating to the Real People Real Faith project had been proposed by the Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub. These would be accompanied with comments and advice to support teaching at Key 2 (KS).

Resolved – That the SACRE Action Plan 2021 – 2022 for the period to September 2021 be noted.

48. SACRE Finance Update

The group manager for school effectiveness provided an update on SACRE Finance. With the Chair's permission, a breakdown of the finance was shared on screen during the meeting.

Members noted that from a total amount of £10,000 funding, £2,786.37 had been spent to date, with £7,213.63 remaining. It was confirmed that the costing for the Action Plan were linked to the figures that had been presented.

With the substantial amount of funding remaining, it was noted that the RE Network meetings could be increased from four meetings per year to six. Further expenditure would be expected to meet the cost of the extra time the Adviser would need to draft the SACRE Annual Report using the new template recommended by NASACRE.

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It was noted that the remaining budget would need to be spent by the End of March 2021, as there was no guarantee of transferring unspent money into the new financial year, particularly in light of the current financial position the Council was in. The uncommitted budget remaining was confirmed as £3,800, including £1,800 earmarked for resources, which SACRE could consider paying into the Oxford Diocese for future use.

The adviser shared on screen, the NASACRE recommended Annual Report framework to show the types of information that were now required to be included the report. Members acknowledged that additional time would be required to draft the first annual report in this new format and it was proposed, seconded and agreed to grant a day's adviser's preparation time.

Resolved:

- i) That the SACRE Finance Update be noted
- ii) That the professional adviser be paid £450 (one day) for drafting the SACRE Annual Report in the new NASACRE recommended format.

49. Crossing the Bridges Programme Revisited

The SACRE discussed revisiting the Crossing the Bridges programme in the Summer Term and proposed that schools be asked what resources they would require to support the project. The value of teaching with real artefacts was discussed and acknowledged that they assisted in giving pupils a sense of identity.

It was agreed that the adviser would conduct further research on the Crossing the Bridges programme and report back with details for discussion at the meeting in November 2022.

With regard to the artefacts that had been stored at St Mary's CE School, it was reported that the headteacher did not appear to be unaware of them being stored at the school. Concerns were raised about the need for SACRE to ensure the availability of resources to support RE teaching, and it was acknowledged that this was one of the core roles of the SACRE.

A proposal to have a lead for each religion, where the lead would provide a virtual tour of their place of worship and encourage children to ask questions during the tour was discussed. The adviser confirmed that there was already a proposal to conduct a virtual tour as part of the Real people, Real faith video series, which could be promoted as part of the Crossing the Bridges programme.

Resolved:

- i) That the Crossing the Bridges Programme Revisited be noted.
- ii) That the professional adviser provide further details at the meeting in November 2022.

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50. SACRE Membership News (An update from all members regarding activities undertaken since the last SACRE meeting)

Councillor Brooker announced that he was in the governing body of three schools. One of the school was in Buckinghamshire (Farnham Royal C of E Primary) where many children from Slough attended. He was also the chair of the finance committee at the school.

The Chair announced that Julie Siddiqi had recently stood down from the Slough SACRE after many years as a member. It was agreed for the Chair to write a formal letter of thanks to Julie on behalf of the SACRE.

Ashpreet Singh Nainu (Chair) reported that he had recently been appointed as a teacher at an outstanding school with the RE quality mark: Gold Award in Wokingham.

The Group Manager, School Effectiveness reported that Khalsa Primary School was covering a whole school teaching on the topic, exhibition of the world. Further details would be sent to the adviser to be included in the next SACRE RE newsletter.

Resolved – That the update be noted.

51. Equality and Diversity - Resources

This item was noted as a standard for sharing information, resources or events relating to equality and diversity.

52. SACRE Members' Attendance Record

It was noted that Councillor Kaur had been present at the last meeting.

Resolved – That the Members' attendance record be noted.

53. Information Items (for noting):

Resolved - That the following circulated information items be noted:

- i) Latest news and updates from NASACRE - SACRE Briefing Issue 29
- ii) Should collective worship in schools end – Bishop Steven's statement to the House of Lords.

54. Date of Next Meeting - 9 March 2022

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 9 March 2022.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 4.30 pm and closed at 6.00 pm)