

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education – Meeting held on Monday, 12th October, 2015.

Present:-

Committee 1 – Christian Denominations and Other Faiths

Zubayr Abbas Bowkan, Waqar Bhatti, Sue Elbrow, Ashpreet Singh Nainu, Hardip Singh Sohal

Committee 2 – Church of England

Rev Andrew Allen, Christine Isles, Robert Simpson

Committee 3 – Representatives of Teacher Associations

Lynda Bussley, Linda Lewis

Committee 4 – Representatives of the LEA

Councillor Brooker

Apologies for Absence -

Julie Siddiqi, Andrea Sparrow, Councillors Arvind Dhaliwal, Rana, and Zarait

Other -

Jo Fageant – Professional Advisor, and Robin Crofts – Director of Education

PART 1

17. Election of Chair

Apologies had been received from the Chair, Julie Siddiqi. As the Vice-Chair was not present at the commencement of the meeting, Councillor Brooker was elected as Chair for the duration of the meeting.

(Councillor Brooker in the Chair)

18. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 10th June 2015

In respect of Minute 16, it was confirmed that the venue that had been offered for the next meeting had been Montem Primary Academy, not St. Mary's School.

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 10th June 2015 be approved as a correct record, subject to the correction of minute 16.

19. Matters Arising

In respect of Minute 6, it was noted that Andrea Sparrow had agreed to contact Open The Book with a view to understanding their availability to visit Slough Schools. As Ms Sparrow was not present, it was agreed that the clerk, and Christine Isles, would contact Ms Sparrow to determine what progress she had made.

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In respect of Minute 12, SACRE Finance, a further update was provided by Robin Crofts, Director of Education.

Members were informed that due to Cambridge Education's internal processes, it had proven difficult to carry over the sum of £1,300.00 into the new financial year; however, the money remained with Cambridge Education and was available to be used for SACRE purposes.

However, as the Cambridge Education contract was due to end in September 2016, it was important to relocate this sum from Cambridge Education before then, ideally before the end of the current 2015-16 Financial Year. Options for which party was best placed to hold this ring-fenced money were still being examined.

Members raised the prospect of the Oxford Diocese potentially holding this sum for Slough SACRE. It was confirmed that Mr Simpson would explore this option before feeding back to Mr Crofts and the clerk.

20. 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, Principal Adviser (Secondary and Business Development) Oxford Diocesan Board of Education, had been appointed to Slough SACRE as part of Committee 2 – the Church of England.

Sue Elbrow confirmed that potential interest had been received in respect of the Judaism vacancy. Ms Elbrow agreed she would confirm this with the interested party before providing their contact details to the clerk.

21. Welcome to new SACRE Member - Jo Fageant

Jo Fageant, Professional Advisor, introduced Mr Robert Simpson, the new representative from the Church of England, appointed by Council at its meeting on 21st July 2015.

SACRE welcomed Mr Simpson, who confirmed that he worked for the Oxford Diocese, held a degree in Theology, and had previously worked in a variety of teaching roles including as an R.E. teacher and as a Head Teacher. Mr Simpson went on to confirm that he was a committed Christian, and was looking forward to taking an active role within Slough SACRE moving forward.

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

Jo Fageant, Professional Advisor, confirmed that she had recently attended a South East England Faith Forum on Religious Education in schools. Mr Zafar Ali of Iqra Primary School spoke at the event, which included a wide ranging discussion including the inherent positives, and challenges, of religious

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education and faith within schools. It was confirmed that the minutes of the meeting would be circulated to SACRE Members via email, once available.

(Lynda Bussley arrived at 16.42. Ms Bussley in the Chair)

Cllr Brooker confirmed that he had recently visited the newly opened Eden Muslim Girls School, currently located on Whitby Road. The School was currently teaching 100 girls in year 7, and 50 in Year 8, and further students remained on the waiting list for a place at the school. Cllr Brooker was very impressed by his visit, particularly with the school's stated aim of being inclusive to people of all, or no, faith.

Sue Elbrow confirmed that she had recently attended a 'Cup of Tea' meeting alongside Julie Siddiqi. The meeting was designed to allow people of different faiths or backgrounds to come together with the aim of removing barriers, fostering relationships and combating feelings of extremism. The event was hosted by a Muslim family, and was a very enjoyable and productive afternoon.

(Zubayr Abbas Bowkan arrived 16.52)

23. A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools - Jo Fageant

Jo Fageant, Professional Advisor, updated SACRE on the recent launch of a briefing paper on "A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools", part of the Westminster Faith Debates in the House of Lords. The paper focussed on three issues:

1. Collective Worship
2. Religious Education
3. Faith Schools

Ms Fageant advised that the paper contained some controversial suggestions for changes, including the implementation of a National Syllabus for RE together with a National SACRE, and a rethink on compulsory RE within schools. Some of these changes would require amendments to current legislation, and could have an impact on the remit of local SACREs.

The NASACRE paper on the briefing paper had raised questions regarding the proposals, and had asked whether local SACREs would like to respond to these questions, in order to present a collective response by the end of 2015.

It was agreed that SACRE would convene a Sub-Committee to discuss the proposals and formulate a draft response. The draft response would then be forwarded to all members of SACRE for further comment, before the final response was sent.

The Sub-Committee was confirmed as:

Jo Fageant

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Rob Simpson
Sue Elbrow
Lynda Bussley
Cllr Preston Brooker

The date of the Sub-Committee meeting was to be arranged between the attendees, outside of the SACRE meeting.

24. Report, Comments & Feedback from Joint SACRE conference on 15th June - Jo Fageant

Jo Fageant, Professional Advisor, introduced a report providing comments on the Joint SACRE conference held on 15th June. Discussions were held on the ongoing Joint SACRE Places of Worship project, and it was confirmed that the previously applied for funding had been granted by Culham St. Gabriel's.

The funding had allowed for work that had focussed on the drafting of new shared booking and evaluation forms, together with student booklets that could be tailored to each individual visit. Moving forward, the potential for an interactive 'app' that could be installed on phones and tablets was being reviewed. However, as the initial funding of £2,000.00 had been used, any further work would require additional contributions from the SACREs involved.

The list of Places of Worship was still being compiled, and it was requested that SACRE members email Jo Fageant with the contact details of any suitable venues that could be included on the list.

Further Joint SACRE meetings were planned to be held three times per year, though as Julie Siddiqi was often busy, it was likely that a deputy would need to be nominated to attend in her place.

Resolved -

- (a) That details of the financial contribution required of Slough SACRE for the Joint SACRE projects be brought to the next meeting for review.
- (b) That the Vice-Chair, Lynda Bussley, be nominated to deputise for Julie Siddiqi at the Joint SACRE meetings on behalf of Slough SACRE, should Julie be unable to attend (availability permitting).
- (c) That, once finalised, the shared booking and evaluation forms be added to all relevant websites, including the Slough SACRE and Oxford Diocesan websites.
- (d) That SACRE Members email Jo Fageant with the contact details of venues suitable for inclusion on the Places of Worship list.

25. SACRE Action Plan - Jo Fageant

Members were updated on which actions had been completed from the Action Plan, and what actions remained.

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Of the completed actions, it was confirmed that savings had been made on the 'Subsidised places for 10 teachers to attend the Joint SACRE Conference' as less than 10 teachers attended. In addition, the money allocated to the 'Drafting of induction materials for new SACRE members' was available, as inductions materials had instead been found on the NASACRE website. There remained money available to buy additional RE Resources, as not all of the previously requested items had been ordered before the end of the previous financial year.

It was agreed that Robin Crofts would circulate an update on the SACRE Finances to all members via email.

The action to catalogue the RE Resources at St Mary's School was discussed. It was confirmed that all old or unusable resources had been removed, and that the final act was to photograph and assign a catalogue number to the resources remaining. It was agreed that Waqar Bhatti would meet with Linda Lewis to review whether he could complete this action. If it was determined that he could not, Jo Fageant would obtain quotes and arrange for the cataloguing to be done externally.

26. Updates to SACRE Website - Democratic Services

The clerk updated members on the additions that had been made to the SACRE website since the last meeting.

It was confirmed that the additions made had included:

- Training Documents for new SACRE Members
- Links to NASACRE
- Details of SACRE Members
- SACRE Newsletters
- SACRE Annual Reports

Suggestions for further additions were sought, with members recommending:

- Berkshire RE Syllabus
- List of scheduled RE teacher meetings
- Places of Worship documents once finalised (booking, evaluation forms etc.)

It was confirmed that new documents such as the SACRE Newsletters, Annual Reports etc would continue to be added on an ongoing basis.

27. The Common Inspection Framework - Robin Crofts

Robin Crofts, Director of Education, updated members on the new Common Inspection Framework for schools, which was operable from September 2015.

Members were advised that the new Framework was designed to provide a greater consistency in the way in which inspections of voluntary or foundation

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schools 'with a religious character' were carried out. Academies that were designated as having a religious character were inspected in an equivalent way via provisions set out in the academy's funding agreement. Academies without a defined religious character had a requirement to provide Collective Worship of a 'broadly Christian nature'.

It was confirmed that the changes outlined in the report were minimal, and the report was noted.

28. Member's Attendance Record

The Member's Attendance Record was noted.

29. Date of Next Meeting - TBC

The clerk proposed several potential dates for the next meeting of SACRE. The dates were discussed, and deemed unsuitable.

It was agreed that the clerk would forward a selection of new dates for members to review, before confirming the agreed date via email.

30. Annual SACRE Report 2014-15

Jo Fageant, Professional Advisor, introduced the draft SACRE annual report for 2014-15. Following feedback to the previous year's report, the draft was designed in the same format, with the aim of being brief and succinct.

Suggestions for further items to be included were sought.

Members suggested including the GCSE and A Level results for Slough RE examinations. It was confirmed that the validated exam results would be available from December 2015. It was agreed that Robin Crofts would draft a report on the results, to be presented at the next SACRE meeting.

To enable an updated draft of the Annual Report to be presented at that next meeting, it was agreed that Robin Crofts would also provide the validated details to Jo Fageant in the interim.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 4.35 pm and closed at 6.35 pm)