

**SLOUGH STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION –  
Meeting held on Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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

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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, 28<sup>th</sup> 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, 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2007 at 4.30 p.m.

Chair

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