

# Swindon Borough Council

## Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

**Tuesday, 23 June 2015**

Staff Room, Haydonleigh Primary School, Haydon Court Drive, Swindon,  
SN25 1JP

At 6.00 p.m.

<b>Group A:</b>	Mr Gurchoran Singh Lyal, Sikh Community
<b>Christian Denominations</b>	Mr David Burbidge, Baptist Church
<b>and Other Religions or</b>	Mrs Sarah Lane Cawte, United Reformed Church
<b>Religious Denominations</b>	Reverend David Howell, Swindon Evangelical Alliance
	Mr M S Khan, Muslim Community
	Mr Tony McAteer, Catholic Community
	Mr Dinesh Patel, Hindu Community
	Vacancy, Methodist Church
	Vacancy, Buddhist Community
	Vacancy, Jewish Community

<b>Group B:</b>	Reverend Clive Deverell
<b>The Church of England</b>	Miss Janet French
	Reverend Norma McKemey
	Ms Steph Mundin
	Mrs Penny Summers

<b>Group C:</b>	Mrs Tracy Mason, NUT
<b>Teacher Associations</b>	Mrs Lottie O'Brien, NASUWT
	Mrs Mandy Sandleton, NASUWT
	Mrs Mel Shepherd, NASUWT
	Ms Catherine Lomax, NASUWT - Deputy
	Paul Sunners, NAHT
	Vacancy
	Vacancy

<b>Group D:</b>	Councillor James Robbins
<b>The Local Authority</b>	Councillor Alan Bishop
	Councillor Fionuala Foley
	Councillor Carol Shelley
	Councillor Gemma McCracken

Co-Opted:	Freddy Pound, Swindon Humanists
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Support Officers:	Katy Staples, SACRE Advisor
	Sarah Foulkes, School Improvement Adviser

**Committee Officer:** Stuart Figini (Telephone 01793 463612)

email: [sfigini@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:sfigini@swindon.gov.uk)

Swindon Borough Council can be contacted at the Civic Offices, Euclid Street, Swindon, SN1 2JH (Telephone 01793 445500)

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## **AGENDA**

**1. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair for the Municipal Year 2015/16**

Nominations are invited for the roles of Chair and Vice-Chair.

The SACRE Constitution requires that the Chair and Vice-Chair are appointed from different representative groups.

Voting for the Chair and Vice-Chair will take place in constituent groups, with each group entitled to a single vote for each role.

**2. Welcome from Haydonleigh Primary School**

Sarah Lane Cawte will provide the SACRE with a brief introduction to Haydonleigh Primary School and Natalie Dent will speak about the role of a new Primary Subject lead for RE when you are not a subject specialist.

**3. Proposed Appointment of Co-Opted Representative**

The Chair will provide an update about a proposal to co-opt a representative from the Baha'I Community to SACRE.

**4. Apologies for Absence**

**5. Declarations of Interest**

Members are reminded that at the start of the meeting they should declare any known interests in any matter to be considered, and also during the meeting if it becomes apparent that they have an interest in the matters being discussed.

**6. Public Question Time**

See explanatory note below. Please phone the Committee Officer whose name and number appears at the top of this agenda if you need further guidance.

**7. Chair's Announcements** (Pages 5 - 16)

- Letter from SACRE Advisor to Lord Nash – Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools and his response
- A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools – Report from Charles Clarke and Linda Woodhead which can be downloaded from [www.faithdebates.org.uk](http://www.faithdebates.org.uk)
- RE and EBacc – A copy of the recent speech from Nick Gibb MP is attached.

**8. Minutes** (Pages 17 - 22)

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

**9. Discovery RE**

The SACRE will receive a presentation from Jan Lever about Discovery RE and there will be an opportunity for questions.

Members of SACRE may wish to visit the Discovery RE website prior to the meeting. The link is <http://discoveryschemeofwork.com/>

**10. Preparation for the Agreed Syllabus Conference (Pages 23 - 24)**

To receive a verbal report from the SACRE Advisor. A proposed timeline is circulated.

**11. Feedback from RE Teachers' Network Meetings**

To receive feedback from recent Primary and Secondary RE Teachers' meetings.

**12. Date and Time of the Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the SACRE is on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015. Members of the SACRE are asked to suggest venues or indicate where this and future meetings of the Panel should be held.

**Date of Despatch:** 15 June 2015

**Public Question Time** - Swindon Borough Council is committed to increasing its accountability to the public and to promoting active citizenship. Up to 15 minutes will be allowed at the start of all Council meetings for questions to the Chair from members of the public about the work of the Committee (except for confidential matters and specific planning applications). Questions must be relevant, clear and concise. Because of time constraints Public Question Time is not an opportunity to make speeches or statements. Prior notice of a question to the Director of Law and Democratic Services is desirable - particularly if detailed background information is needed.

**Access Arrangements** – The Venue is wheelchair accessible and an infrared receiver hearing system is provided. If you would wish to attend the meeting but have any special requirement to enable you to do so please contact the Committee Clerk above, as soon as possible prior to the date of the meeting.

If you would like to receive any of the pages contained in this agenda in a larger print size please contact the Committee Officer whose name appears on the first page of this agenda.

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## Agenda Item 7

Katy Staples  
Adviser to Swindon SACRE  
c/o Stuart Figini  
Civic Offices  
Euclid Street,  
Swindon  
SN1 2JH

2nd April 2015

Dear Lord Nash,

Swindon SACRE would like to thank you for your letter to SACREs dated 7th January 2015.

It is most encouraging to know that as Under Secretary of State for Schools you recognise the important role that SACREs play, that they need to function well and that local authorities have a duty to enable SACREs to fulfil their statutory duties.

We are grateful that you assert SACREs ability to contribute to improving the academic rigour of RE and supporting schools in promoting mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

We also welcome your reminder of the importance of reviewing our agreed syllabus every five years which for us at Swindon SACRE falls in the academic year 2016 -17 and requires extra funding to be a thorough and effective review.

I include a copy of Swindon SACRE's annual report 2013-14 in which you may note that the numbers of students entered for full course GCSE Religious Studies was only 15% as opposed to 42% nationally. SACRE would appreciate the powers to investigate the reasons for this and to put pressure on schools and academies (there is now only one local authority secondary school in Swindon) to ensure that pupils in Key Stage 4 receive the rigorously academic RE to which they are entitled.

It would seem SACREs cannot fulfil their statutory duties without teeth and without appropriate funding. If the Secretary of State for Schools and the Department for Education is serious about the significant contribution that RE makes to promoting social cohesion - in the light of events in Birmingham and Tower Hamlets and the numerous incidents of young British people joining extremist groups - then it needs to ensure there is appropriate funding for SACREs. This could easily be achieved by instructing local authorities that a percentage of the Dedicated Schools Grant is ring-fenced for RE and SACREs.

In your last paragraph you state that “SACREs would not be able to exist without the advice, help and support of dedicated individuals and communities”. However, some of that support needs to be professional and not voluntary for it to be systematic, rigorous and deserving of respect by teachers and headteachers. Appropriate funding for good dedicated clerking of SACRE and agreed syllabus conference meetings needs to be safeguarded, as does the employment of a well qualified and dedicated adviser to each SACRE.

If the Department of Education is serious about the singularly significant role that RE plays in forming a future for Britain as a socially cohesive and harmonious nation then further commitment to financing SACREs is fundamental.

Yours sincerely,

Katy Staples  
Adviser to Swindon SACRE  
[katystaples@bristoldiocese.org](mailto:katystaples@bristoldiocese.org)

on behalf of Swindon SACRE



Department  
for Education

Department for Education  
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Tel: 0370 000 2288

[www.gov.uk/dfe](http://www.gov.uk/dfe)

Email enquiry form:

[www.education.gov.uk/contactus/dfe](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus/dfe)

Date: 24 April 2015

Our ref: 2015-0018651

Ms Katy Staples  
Adviser to Swindon SACRE  
c/o Stuart Figini  
Civic Offices, Euclid Street  
Swindon  
SN1 2JH

Dear Ms Staples,

Thank you for your letter of 13 April, addressed to Lord Nash, about the role of SACRES in promoting the teaching of Religious Education (RE). As Parliament has now dissolved in the period leading up to the General Election, I have been asked to reply as an official in the department.

The department is aware that many individual SACRES, along with NASACRE, are working hard to make academies aware of the advantages of teaching the agreed syllabus and to encourage them to participate in the family of schools that their local SACRE supports. NASACRE is also identifying and disseminating good practice that can help SACRES develop constructive working relationships with academies in their local areas. We will consider what more the department can do to encourage academies who wish to work more closely with their SACRE, and more importantly to ensure that academies are aware of their statutory duties to provide RE for all their pupils.

The analysis of the SACRE reports will help officials to identify good practice but, more importantly, it will also help to ensure that all local authorities are fulfilling their statutory duties, including providing the appropriate level of support and resource to their SACRE. The resourcing of the SACRE is a matter for the local authority. If the analysis of the annual reports does identify significant problems then we will consider what further action is necessary.

Thank you for writing on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

**James Brazil**

**Lead Drafter - Ministerial Correspondence Team**

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Speech

**Nick Gibb: the social justice case for an academic curriculum**

From:

[Department for Education](#) and [Nick Gibb MP](#)

Delivered on:

11 June 2015 (Original script, may differ from delivered version)

Location:

Policy Exchange, London

First published:

11 June 2015

Part of:

[School and college qualifications and curriculum](#)

Schools Minister sets out the government's plans to reinforce the importance of a core academic curriculum for all pupils.



When introducing the second reading of his great [Education Act in January 1944](#), Rab Butler addressed a common objection of the time to the expansion of secondary education which he was about to oversee: 'Who will do the work if everybody is educated?'

Butler's response was characteristically uncompromising: that 'education itself will oil the wheels of industry and will bring a new efficiency, the fruit of modern knowledge, to aid the ancient skill of farm and field'.

The view he was standing against - that a rich education for all is unnecessary, and perhaps even undesirable - is one which has sadly been repeated many times over the past 70 years in different forms. Today, it is more likely to be heard as a denial of the value of rigorous, academic subjects for the most disadvantaged students.

This is an idea which those of us committed to social justice should reject. If we are to deliver a fairer, more socially mobile society, we must secure the highest standards of academic achievement for all young people, and especially those from the least advantaged backgrounds.

**Academic decline**

Many of us have always seen this denial of the value of academic disciplines for the dangerous falsehood that it is. The data shows, however, that this was not sufficient

to prevent a precipitous decline in the study of academic subjects in the years prior to 2010.

By 2010, just 43% of the cohort took a GCSE in a foreign language. In history, the figure had fallen to 31%, and in geography to 26%.

Instead, schools had been tempted to teach qualifications which attracted the most points in the performance tables - not the qualifications that would support young people to progress. The number of so called 'equivalent' qualifications taken in schools up to age 16 exploded from 15,000 in 2004 to 575,000 in 2010.

Year after year, disadvantaged young people were encouraged to take less demanding qualifications so that the 'powers that be' in the education world could congratulate themselves on their performance whilst failing to prepare pupils for success in later life.

In 2011, we asked Professor Alison Wolf to conduct a [review into vocational education](#). Her findings were stark: that many young people had previously been encouraged to take vocational qualifications which were of no, or even negative, value in the labour market. What's more, the students being let down in this way by our education system were disproportionately from poorer backgrounds.

## **Progress**

Since 2010, we have made rapid and significant progress to address this decline in academic standards.

We introduced the new [English Baccalaureate](#) performance measure, showing the proportion of pupils in a school entering and achieving a good GCSE in English, maths, science, history or geography, and a foreign language. Schools have risen to this challenge. The proportion of pupils entering the EBacc has risen from 23% in 2012 to 39% today, and the percentage achieving it has increased from 16% to 24% over the same period. Last year, almost 90,000 more pupils were entered for the EBacc compared to 2010.

We have also acted swiftly to [implement Professor Wolf's recommendations](#). To ensure that vocational qualifications are demanding and high quality, we have removed over 3,000 low-value qualifications from performance tables and introduced rigorous new standards and qualifications. Recognising the vital importance of GCSE English and maths, we have introduced a requirement for young people who fail to secure a C in GCSE English or maths at 16 to continue studying those subjects as part of their course in further education.

But the scale of the challenge we inherited in 2010, and the importance of these academic subjects to the future strength of our culture and economy, means that we need to do more.

Overall, disadvantaged pupils remain half as likely to be entered for the EBacc as their non-disadvantaged peers. 23% of pupils eligible for the pupil premium were entered for the EBacc, compared with 45% of all other pupils.

This gap persists even among the most able pupils. Just last week, the Sutton Trust published analysis which looked at the GCSE performance of pupils who had previously scored in the top 10% nationally at the end of primary school. They found that, even within this group, pupils who had received free school meals were significantly less likely to be taking history, geography, a language, or triple science at GCSE than their peers.

These children, who showed such early promise, have been let down by our failure to offer every pupil the chance to benefit from a core academic curriculum.

This culture of low expectations has afflicted whole local authority areas. Despite our reforms, fewer than 10% of pupils in Knowsley achieve the EBacc, compared to 30% in Halton in the north-west, 35% in Westminster and 34% in Hackney. These disparities are not simply explained by social circumstance - in all 4 local authorities, the proportion of pupils identified as disadvantaged is between 40 and 56%. This is simply unacceptable.

Today, I would like to set out this government's plan to address this challenge by strengthening academic standards further.

But first I want to defend our emphasis on academic subjects against 4 criticisms.

### **Low expectations**

Some have argued that we cannot expect disadvantaged pupils to take academic subjects, or to be motivated by their study. In 2011, an Associate Director of the Institute of Public Policy Research said that:

The problem [with the EBacc] is that very few students from disadvantaged backgrounds actually take those subjects, they won't be motivated to take them. Ministers are now [effectively] incentivising schools to focus their efforts on middle-class children who do well in these subjects.

This is a concern which was difficult to sustain in 2011, and has now decisively been proved wrong. 'Outstanding' schools across the country are demonstrating that a rigorous academic curriculum is the way to overcome educational disadvantage, not an inevitable victim of it.

King Solomon Academy, situated in the heart of a disadvantaged community in Paddington, is one of these schools. 67% of GCSE pupils at King Solomon Academy are eligible for the pupil premium, but despite this, 93% of pupils entered the EBacc, and 76% of pupils achieved it in 2014.

Rushey Mead School in Leicester is yet another example of an 'outstanding' school where they have high expectations for all their pupils. 33% of the school's intake is eligible for the pupil premium, 72%, are entered for the EBacc, and 42% achieve it, well above the national average.

These schools show that all pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, can find academic subjects motivating.

We should never lower our expectations because too many young people are failing to reach them. Rather, we must raise standards by supporting teachers and turning around schools which are struggling. The government is determined to rise to this challenge.

## **A broad curriculum**

It has also been suggested that our emphasis on academic subjects in the national curriculum, and especially the introduction of the EBacc, 'crowds out' the study of other important subjects, particularly the arts.

We should acknowledge that the curriculum always involves trade-offs: more time on one subject means less time on others. Over the years, I've been asked to add scores of subjects - from intellectual property, to Esperanto, to den building - to the national curriculum. Many of these are important and interesting.

The question, though, is always whether they are sufficiently important to justify reducing the time available for the existing subjects in the curriculum, and I make no apology for protecting space for the English Baccalaureate subjects wherever possible.

That is not to say, of course, that subjects outside the English Baccalaureate have no place in schools. The EBacc is a specific, limited measure consisting of only 5 subject areas and up to 8 GCSEs. Whilst this means that there are several valuable subjects which are not included, it also means that there is time for most pupils to study other subjects in addition to the EBacc, including vocational and technical disciplines which are also vital to future economic growth. The vast majority of pupils will rightly continue to take the opportunity to study further academic GCSEs or high value, approved vocational qualifications at KS4 alongside EBacc subjects.

Indeed, the government has consistently promoted high-quality arts and cultural education. Music and art are statutory subjects in the national curriculum, and we are spending over £270 million in music education programmes between 2012 and 2016. And we're spending in this period over £113 million on the [Music and Dance Scheme](#), and over £19 million on a range of cultural education programmes.

The supposed choice between a core academic curriculum on the one hand, and the study of a broad range of subjects on the other, is a false one. Before they begin to specialise, we have to ensure that all pupils have the chance to establish a solid academic foundation upon which they can build their future. Several high-performing countries, including South Korea, Japan and the Netherlands, ensure that a core curriculum of academic subjects is studied and then examined at the age of 16.

## **Success in the modern economy**

Others have argued that, in today's economy, when we cannot predict the jobs of tomorrow, a core academic curriculum is no longer relevant. In his new book, 'Creative Schools', the educationalist Sir Ken Robinson writes:

The old systems of education were not designed with this world in mind. Improving them by raising conventional standards will not meet the challenges we now face.

This argument - that the world today is fundamentally different, so high standards in academic subjects are now less important - is not new. As the American education historian Diane Ravitch has pointed out, educationalists such as William Heard Kilpatrick were predicting the same decline in relevance of academic subjects a hundred years ago:

There is nothing new in the proposals of the 21st century skills movement... If there was one cause that animated the schools of education in the 20th century, it was the search for the ultimate breakthrough that would finally loosen the shackles of subject matter and content.

Sir Ken is correct to recognise the value of flexibility and creativity to success in life and the labour market. But he is wrong to suggest that the best way to foster these attributes is to reduce the emphasis on core academic subjects. As Tom Bennett, a teacher and founder of the superb ResearchEd conferences, put it in his excoriating review of Sir Ken's latest book:

Is there anything more sad than the sight of someone denying children the right to an academic curriculum and the fruits thereof, than from someone who is the very pinnacle of such an education?

By contrast, the best preparation for securing a good job is a solid grounding in core academic subjects: Professor Wolf describes achieving at least a C at GCSE in English and maths as of 'critical importance' to employment. And University College London 'considers experience of learning a foreign language a vital element of a broad and balanced education'.

This isn't a debate between academic subjects on the one hand, and vocational qualifications on the other. It's about ensuring that all school children up to the age of 16 are properly educated in those academic subjects that best equip them for their future; either for high-quality vocational education after 16, or further academic education until ultimately going on to engage in training for a vocation.

### **Anti-intellectualism**

Finally, and perhaps most perniciously, some even suggest that a core academic curriculum represents a kind of elitism - as if the study of Wordsworth's poetry or Rutherford's Standard Model is for some people, not others.

Paulo Freire was a Brazilian educationalist with a commitment to the education of the poor. But his vision of an effective curriculum differs sharply from my own. He believed that the traditional model of education, in which a teacher communicates knowledge to his or her pupils, is oppressive because this deprives them of the opportunity to challenge received wisdom and develop their own contrary perspective.

Freire was of course right that society's culture and body of knowledge is disproportionately the product of those who have themselves benefited from a rigorous academic education. And in the past, unequal access to such an education has meant that the leading lights of literature, science and the arts have often come disproportionately from advantaged backgrounds.

But it is exactly for this reason that we now need to extend the benefits of a rigorous academic education to all. The body of academic knowledge belongs to everyone, regardless of background, circumstance or job.

This is not a political issue of left and right, but rather a choice whether to stand behind aspiration and social justice, or to take the easier route of excuses and low expectations.

It is striking, therefore, that the government's commitment to academic rigour receives support from many politicians across the political spectrum. Diane Abbott has proved to be one of the most eloquent supporters of our approach, and has spoken out powerfully in favour of a core academic curriculum:

Precisely if someone is the first in their family to stay on past school leaving age, precisely if someone's family does not [have] social capital, and precisely if someone does not have parents who can put in a word for them in a difficult job market, they need the assurance of rigorous qualifications and, if at all possible, core academic qualifications.

This view is reflected in parents' hopes for their children. In 2010, the Millennium Cohort Study found that 97% of new mothers wanted their child to go to university. A core academic education remains an aspiration for all, and the government is determined to stand with parents and teachers to make it a reality.

To those who criticise our focus on academic subjects, or suggest that the EBacc is a Gradgrindian anachronism, I have a simple question: would you want your child to be denied the opportunity to study a science, history or geography, and a foreign language?

### **Next steps**

It is for these reasons that the government will take further steps to restore academic subjects to the heart of the curriculum in all schools.

We are reforming GCSEs and A levels so that they are more rigorous, and provide better preparation for employment and further study. GCSE students taking modern languages will now have to translate into the target language accurately, applying grammatical knowledge of language and structures in context. GCSE students in maths will have to know how to develop clear mathematical arguments and solve realistic mathematical problems.

A level maths students are now required to study both statistics and mechanics. For both A level maths and further maths, there is a greater focus on mathematical

problem solving and modelling, and language and proofs to ensure students understand the underlying mathematical concepts.

We are working with teachers and publishers to increase the use and availability of high-quality textbooks in schools. Good textbooks provide a structured, well-honed progression through a subject's content. They also ease workload for teachers, who no longer need to spend whole evenings and weekends preparing ad-hoc resources. Despite these benefits, textbooks are now a rare sight in English classrooms: only 10% of primary maths teachers here use a textbook as the basis for their teaching, compared to 70% in Singapore and 95% in Finland. I have challenged textbook publishers to do better, and am determined that we will secure high-quality resources to underpin an academic curriculum.

We are improving standards of mathematics by supporting schools to adopt the proven mastery approach to teaching maths. The mastery model emphasises whole class teaching, systematic progression, and - crucially - the expectation that every child can succeed in mathematics. This approach is informed by teaching methods in Shanghai, where 15-year-olds significantly outperform their English peers. Shanghai tops the PISA table for performance in maths and students there are on average 3 years ahead of their counterparts in England.

And just to emphasise its importance for success in later life, Shanghai also came top in the PISA table in financial literacy, scoring significantly higher than the second-placed Flemish community in Belgium.

All of these measures will continue to raise academic standards, so that every pupil receives the education to which they are entitled. In due course, we will also set out details of our expectation that secondary school pupils should take English Baccalaureate subjects at age 16. In doing so, we will listen closely to the views of teachers, headteachers, and parents on how best to implement this commitment. And we will ensure that schools have adequate lead in time to prepare for any major changes.

For some schools already leading the way, such as King Solomon Academy and Rushey Mead School, this change will pass by unnoticed. But for others, where only a small minority currently achieve the EBacc, there is no doubt that this will be a significant challenge. We will support these schools to raise standards, but make no apology for expecting every child to receive a high-quality core academic education.

Together, these measures will give more pupils the preparation they need to succeed - whether that's getting a place at a good university, starting an apprenticeship, or finding their first job. They will provide the foundations of an education system with social justice at its heart, in which every young person reaches their potential.

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**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**TUESDAY, 10 MARCH 2015**

**PRESENT:-**

**Group A:** Mr David Burbidge (Baptist Church), Mrs Sarah Christian Denominations and Lane Cawte (United Reformed Church - Chair), Other Religions or Religious Reverend David Howell (Swindon Evangelical Denominations Alliance) and Mr Dinesh Patel (Hindu Community)

**Group B:** Reverend Clive Deverell, Miss Janet French and Church of England Reverend Norma McKemey

**Group C:** Mrs Tracy Mason, Mrs Lottie O'Brien (Vice- Teacher Organisations Chair) and Paul Sunners

**Group D:** Councillors Fionuala Foley and Cindy Matthews Councillors

Also in attendance: Katy Staples (SACRE Advisor), Paddy Bradley (Head of Economy, Skills and Property Development)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor James Robbins, Ms Steph Mundin, Mrs Mel Shepherd, Mr Tony McAteer, Councillor Alan Bishop, Freddy Pound and Councillor Gemma McCracken

**77. Election of Chair**

**Resolved:** That Sarah Lane Cawte be appointed as Chair of the SACRE for the Municipal Year 2014/15.

**78. Welcome from Gorse Hill Baptist Church**

David Burbidge welcomed the SACRE to Gorse Hill Baptist Church and gave a brief introduction to the work of the Baptist Church.

David explained that the church was very involved in the local community and held a number of events that all sectors of society participated in. In particular these included – toddlers groups, English classes, Bangladeshi dancing, various slimming clubs, kids clubs, free community day, messy church and Easter Unwrapped.

The Chair thanked David for his informative presentation and the church's hospitality.

**79. Declarations of Interest**

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No Declarations were made.

## **80. Public Question Time**

No public questions were received during the meeting.

## **81. Chair's Announcements**

- **Letter from Gideons International**

The Chair referred to a letter from David Howlett, Chair of the Swindon Branch of Gideons International about how the Gideons could tailor their presentations to schools to fit in with the requirements for RE, Social Studies, Humanities and Health and Social Education. The SACRE did recognise that currently there was no National Curriculum for RE.

SACRE noted that Katy Staples had responded to David Howlett and arranged to meet him and would feedback any comments from this meeting to the SACRE.

- **Letter from Discovery RE / Letter from NASACRE about RE Resources**

The Chair referred to two letters received from Discovery RE and NASACRE about the use of resources to help with the teaching of RE.

The Chair reported that a representative from Discovery RE will be asked to attend the next meeting of SACRE in June 2015 to make a brief presentation about the work of Discovery RE.

- **Letter to SACREs from Lord Nash**

The Chair referred to a letter from Lord Nash, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools about the role of SACREs and the development of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and how to resource SACREs more appropriately.

**Resolved:**

That Katy Staples respond to Lord Nash's letter on behalf of the Swindon SACRE to include the comments of SACRE members and attaching a copy of the 2013/2014 Annual Report

- **NASACRE Response to Teaching RE Post Charlie Hebdo**

The Chair referred to a statement from NASACRE following the recent murders in France at Charlie Hebdo and Hyper Casher.

**Resolved:**

That the SACRE consider, at its next meeting, guidance they wish to offer schools on the sensitivity of teaching Islam in light of the above tragic events.

## **82. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2014 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## **83. The Development Plan 2015-2017**

The SACRE was informed by the SACRE Advisor that the Swindon SACRE Development Plan 2015-17 was due to be updated to take into account the suggested key priorities and the current context for Swindon SACRE.

The SACRE divided into groups and considered the priorities in relation to the action, person responsible, review date and cost. The SACRE then received feedback from each Group, which would be collated into a workable draft Development Plan.

**Resolved:**

That the SACRE Advisor collates the points raised and responses received in relation to the draft Development Plan 2015-17 and produce a workable draft document for further consideration at the next meeting in June 2015.

**84. DfE Response to Consultation and Final Decisions about GCSEs**

The SACRE received the Department for Education RE GCSE subject content document which had been previously been consulted on and considered by the SACRE at its meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2014.

**Resolved:**

That the RE GSCE subject content document be noted.

**85. Draft Swindon SACRE Annual Report 2013/14**

The SACRE received its draft Annual Report, along with an updated Chair's introduction, covering the period September 2013 to August 2014.

The Annual Report set out the following areas:

- membership
- meetings held
- challenges and opportunities that lay ahead
- standards and quality of Religious Education
- examination results data
- standards and achievement quality of teaching and quality of leadership and management of RE
- managing the SACRE and partnership with the local authority and other key stakeholders
- SACRE Development – CPD offered
- Further training signposted for teachers
- the effectiveness of the Local Agreed Syllabus
- collective worship
- SACRE as a representative in a diverse community.

In considering the Report the following amendments were suggested:

- Page 1 – Chair's Introduction – typing titles in full followed by the abbreviated version in brackets
- Page 3 – Group D – Local Authority Representatives – to indicate the dates that the representatives served on SACRE
- Page 3 – Support Offices – to amend the title for Paddy Bradley to read Head of Economy and Skills
- To add some wording about the scale of the school catchment area including the number of pupils studying RE

- Page 8 – 1c – To qualify the statement
- Page 8 – to update and reorder the table at 2a SACRE Development

The SACRE was informed that the Annual Report, once finalised, would be submitted to the National Association of SACREs along with a copy to the Children's Trust Board and all schools and academies.

**Resolved:**

1. That the draft SACRE Annual Report be approved, subject to the amendments detailed above, and that the SACRE Advisor be authorised to finalise the report and to submit it to the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE).
2. That the draft Annual Report be forwarded to the Swindon Children's Trust Board and all schools and academies to heighten the awareness within the Council of the work of Swindon SACRE.
3. That SACRE consider the interest in studying RE in secondary schools at a future meeting.

**86. SACRE and Youth Forum/Curriculum for Life**

The SACRE considered a report from Paul Sunners about (i) including an item on the agenda for SACRE representative feedback and (ii) support for Swindon Youth Forum's pro-active stance in encouraging all Swindon secondary schools to ensure their curriculum reflects a 'Curriculum for Life'.

(i) Agenda item for SACRE Representation Feedback

Paul indicated that he was currently the SACRE representative on the Council's Health, Adult and Children Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HACS). It was noted that currently there was no standard agenda item to allow members of SACRE to provide feedback of meetings or conferences they had attended as a representative of Swindon SACRE.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services reported that the Council were currently reviewing the governance arrangements of the Overview and Scrutiny function which included SACRE representation on HACS. It was suggested that feedback from SACRE representatives would be a standing item on the agenda, and would include reports from those who had attended conferences on behalf of Swindon SACRE, or other meetings as a Swindon SACRE representative.

(ii) Curriculum for Life

Paul suggested that the SACRE supported the Swindon Youth Forum in encouraging schools and academies to support of the Curriculum for Life.

The SACRE felt that the suggestion could only be supported where the agenda for the Curriculum for Life and the role of SACRE coincide for example in issues relating to religion and belief.

**Resolved:**

1. That the request for a standard agenda item to be added to future SACRE

agenda for SACRE members to report back on meetings or conferences attended as a SACRE representative be agreed.

2. That the Swindon Youth Forum be supported in its endeavour to encourage all Swindon secondary schools and academies to ensure their curriculum reflects a 'Curriculum for Life' where agenda's coincide as detailed above.

#### **87. Charitable Bid to Secure Succession Planning in RE**

The SACRE Advisor reminded SACRE of a recent bid by the Diocese of Bristol to implement a project with the aim of identifying and addressing unmet needs of RE teachers in the Swindon and surrounding area.

The SACRE noted that the bid had only been partially successful and the Diocese had secured £5,000 for this work.

The SACRE Advisor also spoke about a further joint bid with Exeter and Cornwall by the Diocese to the Jerusalem Trust for a share of £300,000 for a similar project in the Swindon area. The project was proceeding and the SACRE Advisor would report on developments at the next meeting.

#### **Resolved:**

That the comments of the SACRE Advisor be noted and that an update on developments would be reported at the next meeting.

#### **88. Feedback from RE Teachers' Network Meetings**

The SACRE Advisor explained that there had not been any RE Teachers' Network meetings. However, a Secondary meeting was planned for 5<sup>th</sup> May 2015 and Primary meeting for the week commencing 16<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

#### **Resolved:**

That the comments of the SACRE Advisor be noted

#### **89. Date and Time of the Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of SACRE would be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2015, commencing at 6:00pm at a venue to be agreed.

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## **SUGGESTED PROCEDURE AND TIMETABLE FOR REVIEW OF AGREED SYLLABUS**

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### **1. June to July 2015**

- 1.1 Conduct analysis of current syllabus in relation to national, regional and local developments and prepare questionnaire for consultation

### **2. September 2015 to March 2016**

- 2.1 Establish steering group conducts and analyses consultation results: recommendations SACREs
- 2.2 SACRE appoints Agreed Syllabus Committees (ASCs) to review the current syllabus in the light of consultation findings
- 2.3 In the light of ASC suggestions, the steering group develops appropriate materials for Swindon AS and presents them to SACRE

### **3. March to May 2016**

- 3.1 ASCs review new materials
- 3.2 Steering Group amends material as required and assures quality
- 3.3 ASCs approve new syllabus and recommend to LAs for adoption  
LAs inform Secretary of State

### **4. Spring and Summer Terms 2016**

- 4.1 Upload new materials to appropriate website
- 4.2 Publicise the launch of the new syllabus in schools and at special network meetings and conduct training for teachers

### **5. September 2016**

- 5.1 New Agreed Syllabus to be in use in schools.

**6. *Budget Implications*** (If review conference decides that some amendments are required)

- 6.1 Financial Year 2015-16: Costs of steering group conference, consultations and analysis.  
Costs of any new writing, editing and artwork for website: working parties/advisers.  
Publicity costs.  
Agreed Syllabus Conferences meetings.
- Financial Year 2016-17: Syllabus teacher conferences or meetings.