

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TUESDAY, 1 OCTOBER 2013

PRESENT:-

Group A:
Christian Denominations and
Other Religions or Religious
Denominations

Mr David Burbidge (Baptist Church), Mr Mark Cawte (Methodist) (Chair), Mrs Sarah Lane Cawte (United Reformed Church), Reverend David Howell (Swindon Evangelical Alliance), Mr M S Khan (Muslim Community) and Mr Tony McAteer (Catholic Community)

Group B:
Church of England

Reverend Norma McKemey and Ms Steph Munda

Group C:
Teacher Organisations

Mrs Mandy Sandleton and Mr Paul Sunners

Group D:
Councillors

Councillors Fay Howard, Alan Bishop and John Haines

Also in attendance:

Katy Staples (SACRE Advisor) and Sarah Foulkes (School Improvement Adviser)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor James Robbins, Miss Janet French, Mrs Penny Summers, Mrs Tracy Mason, Miss Lottie Rowe (Vice-Chair) and Councillor Fionuala Foley

12. 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.

13. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

14. Chair's Announcements

i) Stuart Figini

The Chairman welcomed Stuart Figini, Committee Officer and new Clerk to the SACRE, to the meeting. SACRE were informed that Stuart had just started at Swindon Borough Council and came from Wiltshire Council where he was also a Committee Officer. The Chairman wished him well for his time at Swindon.

ii) RE Review

The Chairman reported that the SACRE responses to the national developments in RE had now been forwarded to the Religious Council for England and Wales.

iii) New NASACRE Website and Log-on Details

The Chairman explained that NASACRE had a new website and informed SACRE of the log-on and password details.

iv) Agreed Syllabus – Electronic Version

It was noted that the current version of the agreed syllabus was available on the Swindon Borough Council website at the following link:

<http://ww5.swindon.gov.uk/moderngov/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13113&path=0>

v) South West Conference for SACRE's

The Chairman reported that the South West Conference for SACRE's would be held on Thursday 20 March 2014 at Dillington House, Ilminster.

Paul Sunners expressed an interest in attending the conference on behalf of SACRE.

vi) Annual Report 2013

The Chairman explained that the SACRE Advisor, Katy Staples was due to start drafting the SACRE Annual Report for 2013 and asked members to forward any relevant items from schools or pupils, including photographs and pupils work that could be incorporated within the report to either the SACRE Advisor or the Chairman.

15. Minutes

Resolved:

That, subject to the letter 's' being removed from David Howell's name on pages 3 and 4, the minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2013, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

16. Membership Update

The SACRE considered a report of the SACRE Advisor about proposed changes in the membership of SACRE.

The Director of Law and Democratic Services reminded SACRE that at their last meeting on 25 June 2013 they had asked for the British Humanist Association to be approached for a representative to serve on SACRE. It was noted that a Humanist representative could only be co-opted to serve on SACRE as currently they were prevented by law from being full members of Group A.

It was noted that representatives from Group A, Christian Denominations and other Religions or Religious Denominations, Group B, The Church of England and Group C, Teacher Associations had one and a half years remaining on their term of office and it was suggested that a Humanist representative should be appointed for the same term.

SACRE also considered the appointment of Buddhist and Jewish representatives to Group A. The Chairman explained that he had been in touch with the Jewish Board of Deputies and also the Network of Buddhist Organisations for nominations.

Resolved:

1. That Council be recommended to increase the representation of Group A, Christian Denominations and other Religions or Religious Denominations on SACRE from eight to ten, to include two additional representatives from the Buddhist and Jewish faiths.
2. That a Humanist representative be co-opted to attend future meetings of SACRE with a term of office up to Annual Council 2015 to coincide with the remaining term of office of those representatives from Group A and B.
3. That the British Humanist Association be asked to nominate a representative to attend future SACRE meetings following consultation with the local Humanist grouping.

17. Debate on the Future of SACREs

The SACRE considered the report of the SACRE Advisor updating members on the debate on the Future of SACRE's in response to a presentation from Dr Mark Chater, Director of the Culham Institute at the NASACRE 2013 AGM.

A copy of the presentation by Dr Chater was circulated and the SACRE were asked to split into groups to respond to a number of questions in relation to i) the extent to which members concurred with Dr Chater's analysis of SACRE's and ii) did SACRE's need new structures to transform and sustain RE for today and tomorrow.

SACRE in considering the above points on the whole concurred with the majority of the analysis made by Dr Chater. It was suggested that SACRE's had a huge amount of responsibility but lacked power. The support received from the SACRE Advisor was very welcome and made a significant and valuable contribution, especially in the support given to teacher's professional development. It was noted that there was a need for SACRE to be more proactive and to raise awareness of its role within the school environment at every opportunity.

SACRE suggested that a Sub-Group be established to develop a strategy and actions to promote the role of Swindon SACRE in schools and academies for Headteachers, Teachers and Pupils.

Resolved:

1. That the report and the presentation by Dr Mark Chater be noted.

2. That a Sub-Group be established to develop a strategy and actions to promote the role of Swindon SACRE in schools and academies for Headteachers , Teachers and Pupils, with the following membership:

- Mr Mark Cawte
- Steph Mundin
- Mr Paul Sunners
- Any other volunteers to contact the SACRE Advisor as soon as possible

18. Examples of Work at network Meetings

SACRE received a report from the SACRE Advisor who provided examples of activities carried out at the most recent RE Cluster and Network meetings and updated Members on the Network meetings for RE Teachers and Co-ordinators in Swindon.

The SACRE split into groups to undertake an example of an activity provided to primary school children who had the opportunity to visit places of worship. Members then discussed their responses to the activity.

Resolved:

To note the report.

19. Development Plan

SACRE considered the report of the SACRE Advisor which provided updates to the SACRE Development Plan 2012-2014.

The SACRE Advisor referred to priority 2b of the SACRE Development Plan and suggested that a Sub-Group meeting was necessary to look at developing new distinctively local Swindon RE units of work for Swindon schools and academies.

It was suggested that there needed to be an evaluation of the RE material available for schools, especially as some schools may have already developed some material for their own use, which could be made available for wider school use. It was also noted that many people with a faith background were involved in charitable and faith based work and it would be useful to have a profile of those involved along with the type of activity undertaken.

The SACRE members also proposed other avenues for sourcing information about how people have and continue to make a difference in their local area.

Resolved:

1. That the report and Development Plan 2012-14 be noted.

2. That a Sub-Group be established to look at developing new distinctively local Swindon RE units of work for Swindon schools and academies, with the following membership:
 - Mr Mark Cawte
 - Mr David Burbidge
 - Rev David Howell
 - Mr M S Khan
 - Mr Tony McAteer
 - Any other volunteers to contact the SACRE Advisor as soon as possible
3. That the Sub-Group be asked to report their findings back to the next meeting of SACRE on 3 December 2013.

20. National Developments

The SACRE considered a report from the SACRE Advisor which provided information about national developments in relation to religious education.

In particular the SACRE Advisor highlighted the following:

- RE Review 2013: New Guidance - updates were available on the Religious Education Council of England and Wales website, with a launch of the RE Review being held at 5:30pm on Thursday 28 November 2013 at the Graduate School of Education at Bristol University.
- Inter Faith Week: 17-23 November 2013 – The Chairman asked for information about any school events linked with the Inter Faith Week and encouraged SACRE members to attend any events being held during the week
- The Swindon Interfaith Group Annual Civic Celebration 'More than enough?' being held on Wednesday 23 October 2013 at the Pilgrim Centre, Regent Street, Swindon at 7:30pm.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

21. Date and Time of the Next Meeting

It was noted that meetings of the SCARE would be held on:

- Tuesday 3rd December 2013 commencing at 6:00pm; and
- Tuesday 18th March 2014 commencing at 6:00pm

Meetings would be held in the Civic Offices, Euclid Street unless an alternative venue was volunteered.