

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TUESDAY, 10 MARCH 2015

PRESENT:-

Group A:
Christian Denominations and
Other Religions or Religious
Denominations

Mr David Burbidge (Baptist Church), Mrs Sarah Lane Cawte (United Reformed Church - Chair), Reverend David Howell (Swindon Evangelical Alliance) and Mr Dinesh Patel (Hindu Community)

Group B:
Church of England

Reverend Clive Deverell, Miss Janet French and Reverend Norma McKemey

Group C:
Teacher Organisations

Mrs Tracy Mason, Mrs Lottie O'Brien (Vice-Chair) and Paul Sunners

Group D:
Councillors

Councillors Fionuala Foley and Cindy Matthews

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 Mordin, 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 2nd 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 2nd 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 5th May 2015 and Primary meeting for the week commencing 16th 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 23rd June 2015, commencing at 6:00pm at a venue to be agreed.