

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TUESDAY, 20 OCTOBER 2015

PRESENT:-

Group A:
Christian Denominations and
Other Religions or Religious
Denominations

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

Group B:
Church of England

Reverend Clive Deverell, Miss Janet French and Ms Steph Mundin

Group C:
Teacher Organisations

Paul Sunners

Group D:
Councillors

Councillors Fionuala Foley, Carol Shelley and Gemma McCracken

Also in attendance:

Katy Staples (SACRE Advisor), Peter Nathan (Head of Education), Sarah Foulkes (School Improvement Adviser) Fidelma Meehan (Baha'i Community) and Freddy Pound (Swindon Humanists)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor James Robbins, Reverend Norma McKemey, Mrs Tracy Mason, Mrs Lottie O'Brien, Mrs Mel Shepherd, Ms Catherine Lomax, Mr M S Khan, Mr Tony McAteer and Councillor Alan Bishop

101. 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.

102. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

103. Chair's Announcements

- **Religious Education and British Values – Issue and Opportunities and Resources**

The Chair referred to a Religious Education and British Values booklet that had recently been published by RE Today. The booklet addressed some of the issues and opportunities arising from the requirement to promote British Values. This included policy ideas, guidance, HMI requirements review and high quality lesson ideas for pupils in every key stage.

SACRE members were encouraged to highlight the importance of the booklet and its contents to their schools.

- **Discovery RE Folder**

SACRE members were reminded that the Chair had a copy of the Discovery RE folder, which was available for any member to examine if they wished.

- **A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools**

The Chair referred to a report from Charles Clarke and Linda Woodhead about religion and belief in schools. SACRE were encouraged to examine the report, which contained information about the future of SACRE's. The SACRE agreed that the report would be considered further at their next meeting.

104. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 20th October 2015, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

105. School to School Support

The SACRE received a report from Steph Mundin about the help she offered schools through school to school support and the reasons why this is an effective model for RE support in Swindon.

Steph, in response to a number of questions, explained that RE Co-ordinators from other schools are referred to her by the SACRE Advisor. In general the RE Co-ordinators sought help, advice and experience in a number of specific areas, some of which include planning units of work, curriculum delivery, observing lessons and sharing resource ideas etc. Steph spoke about the process used when supporting schools and the benefits of that support both for her and the RE Co-ordinator being supported.

The Chair thanked Steph for her very informative presentation.

106. SACRE Membership

The SACRE received an update report from the Director of Law and Democratic Services about the current SACRE membership. The SACRE also received training presentation slides produced by NASACRE, which responded to the following four questions:

- What is a SACRE?
- How is it composed?
- What is its role? and
- What are the Local Authority's responsibilities?

The Director spoke about the composition of the Swindon SACRE and the 4 representative Groups that made up its membership. He explained that the SACRE Constitution indicated that Groups A (Christian Denominations and other religions or religious denominations), B (Church of England) and C (Teacher Associations) held office for a four year period, whilst Group D (Local Authority) members were

appointed annually by Swindon Council.

The SACRE noted that Group A was representative of the top six religions in Swindon following the 2011 Census on Religious Belief. They were informed that there were a number of vacancies for Groups A, B and C and that the four year period for appointments to these Groups was due to be renewed. In light of this advice and the need to fill Group vacancies, the SACRE suggested that advice be sought from the Council's legal department about extending the timescale for renewing SACRE memberships for Groups A, B and C until June 2016, once the Council elections had taken place and Local Authority members had been appointed to Group D.

The SACRE then split into groups and considered a couple of activities about 'what makes an effective SACRE' and 'what makes a good SACRE member'. Members then discussed their responses to the activities. The Chair encouraged members to think about and reflect upon their contribution to the Swindon SACRE.

Resolved: That the Director of Law and Democratic Services seek advice about extending the timescale for renewing SACRE memberships for Groups A, B and C until June 2016 and reports further at the next meeting.

107. Website Update

The SACRE received an update report from Freddy Pound about the Swindon SACRE website.

Freddy explained that the SACRE Website was available but it required content from SACRE members. The SACRE Advisor suggested that the following documents and information would make the website a useful resource and engage the community:

- The Agreed Syllabus
- Time to Breathe document
- Profile of SACRE members
- CPD of Worship
- Reviews of useful resources
- SACRE Advisor's bi-annual newsletter
- Frequently asked questions
- Contact directory
- Contact forms

Resolved:

1. That SACRE members forward the information detailed above to Freddy Pound for inclusion in the Swindon SACRE website by January 2016.
2. The Freddy Pound provide an update on progress at the next meeting.

108. The Agreed Syllabus Review

The SACRE considered a report of the SACRE Advisor setting out details of how the Agreed Syllabus should be reviewed.

The SACRE Advisor highlighted the proposed procedure and timetable for the review and explained that the new Syllabus should be complete and ready for use in schools by September 2016. The review would include the establishment of a Steering Group that would analyse the current Agreed Syllabus in relation to national, regional and local developments, consultation and development of appropriate materials for Swindon. Once the appropriate approvals had been achieved the new materials would be uploaded to a suitable website with publicity and training for teachers.

Prior to the meeting SACRE members had the opportunity to view a short survey about the Agreed Syllabus which the SACRE Advisor was proposing to circulate to all Swindon schools during the early part of November 2015. The survey results would be considered at the next meeting.

Resolved:

1. That the proposed procedure and timetable for the review of the Agreed Syllabus be agreed.
2. That a Steering Group be established with the following membership:
 - Sarah Lane Cawte – Group A
 - Steph Mundin – Group B
 - Janet French – Group B
 - Rev'd Clive Deverell – Group B
3. That the results of the Agreed Syllabus survey of schools in Swindon be considered at the next meeting.
4. That the SACRE be encouraged to reflect on the NASACRE document about Agreed Syllabus Conferences.

109. Learn Teach Lead RE - Update

The SACRE received an update from the SACRE Advisor about a Learn Teach Lead RE (LTLRE) project in the Taunton to Swindon area.

The SACRE were informed that the project aimed to support all teachers of RE irrespective of their experience or qualifications through practical support at hub meetings and the opportunity to participate in projects that developed their teaching skills and the learning experiences of those they teach. A successful project was running in the Devon / Cornwall area and this project would seek to replicate that model for the Taunton / Swindon area. The project would identify unmet needs in relation to the teaching of RE and support the development of the project to improve the quality of teaching and learning outcomes and leadership.

It was noted that the project was in its early stages of development and that Ed Pawson had been appointed as Project Director. He would have overall responsibility for the identification and support of training needs for teachers of RE across the primary and secondary phase for the area, including Swindon. The project would work alongside the support currently offered to Swindon schools.

The SACRE acknowledged that teachers in Swindon were a large resource that suffered from a lack of RE experience and knowledge and this project would aim to respond to this need.

Resolved:

1. That the SACRE supports the establishment and future development of the LTLRE project in the Swindon area.
2. That Ed Pawson be invited to a future meeting of SACRE to speak about the work of LTLRE.
3. That the SACRE Advisor provides a regular update on the development of the project.

110. CPD Offered and Feedback from Teachers Network Meetings

The SACRE Advisor reported on the recent Secondary and Primary RE Teachers' Network meetings held since the last SACRE meeting.

The SACRE noted that a smaller number of schools attended the Secondary meeting as there was an issue with the meeting date. However, the meeting was very productive and they considered what an assessment was like at primary, secondary and KS3 and the use of materials for the sanctity of life. Ellen McCarthy led the session for the Primary meeting where they considered and discussed the strategies for being a subject leader and how to make RE lively.

111. Feedback from SACRE Representatives

The SACRE confirmed the appointment of Paul Sunners as their representative on the Swindon Borough Council's Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Paul reported on the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22nd July and 2nd September, 2015. He highlighted the main issues discussed at the meetings that were of concern for the SACRE.

The Chair thanked Paul for his report.

112. Date and Time of the Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the SACRE would be held on 22nd March 2016, commencing at 6:00pm. The SACRE Advisor would be contacting Isambard Community School RE Department about hosting the meeting.