

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TUESDAY, 22 MARCH 2016

PRESENT:-

Group A: Mrs Sarah Lane Cawte (Chair) (United Christian Denominations and Other Religions or Religious Denominations) (Reformed Church) and Reverend David Howell (Swindon Evangelical Alliance)

Group B: Reverend Norma McKemey and Ms Steph Church of England Mundin

Group C: Paul Sunners
Teacher Organisations

Group D: Councillors James Robbins, Carol Shelley and Councillors Gemma McCracken

Also in attendance: Peter Nathan and Katy Staples (SACRE Advisor)

Apologies for absence were received from Fidelma Meehan, Reverend Clive Deverell, Mr Gurchoran Singh Lyal, Miss Janet French, Mrs Tracy Mason, Mrs Lottie O'Brien, Mrs Mandy Sandleton, Ms Catherine Lomax, Mr David Burbidge, Mr M S Khan, Mr Tony McAteer, Mr Dinesh Patel, Sarah Foulkes, Councillor Alan Bishop, Councillor Fionuala Foley and Freddy Pound

113. 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.

114. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

115. Welcome from Isambard Community School

The Chair welcomed SACRE to Isambard Community School and introduced Natalie Chapman and Karis Docherty, RE specialists at the School. Ms Chapman and Ms Docherty made a presentation about the successes and challenges facing RE at the School and how SACRE could offer support.

The Chair thanked Natalie and Karis for their very informative presentation.

116. Chair's Announcements

There were no Chair's announcements.

117.

Minutes and Matters Arising

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

Matters Arising

Minute 106 – SACRE Membership

- a) The Clerk reported that the Director of Law and Democratic Services had been consulted about extending the timescale for renewing SACRE memberships for Groups A, B and C until September 2016. He advised that the SACRE Constitution and legislation allowed the amendment and the timescales could be extended as detailed above.

The SACRE noted that membership renewal forms would be circulated in due course to Groups A, B and C.

- b) The Chair reported that the Buddhist Community and Jewish Community had nominated one representative each to attend future SACRE meetings.

118.

Draft SACRE Annual Report 2014/15

The SACRE received its draft Annual Report covering the period September 2014 to August 2015.

The Annual Report provided information in relation to the following areas:

- Support for schools
- Key events during the academic year 2014/15
- British Values, the Duty to Prevent and Religious Education
- Best Practice Forum
- New SACRE website
- Agreed Syllabus for RE in Swindon
- Attendance by SACRE members at outside events
- National Issues including - Challenging extremism, Life beyond levels and A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools
- membership
- Funding and administration issues
- meetings held
- examination results data

In considering the Annual Report, the SACRE suggested that the attendance levels at Primary and Secondary Network meetings should be included in the Reports final version.

In addition to receiving RE exam data, the SACRE considered national statistics in relation to 2014/15 Key Stage 4 results for GCSE RE. The SACRE expressed concern that Swindon Borough Council had the lowest percentage of entries nationally for their Key Stage 4 cohort. It was suggested that further research was required to gain a better understanding of the figures.

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 Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee and all schools and academies.

Resolved – 1) That the draft SACRE Annual Report is approved, subject to the inclusion of attendance levels at Primary and Secondary Network meeting, 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 Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee and all schools and academies in Swindon to heighten the awareness within the Council of the work of Swindon SACRE.

3) That the SACRE Advisor, in consultation with the Chair, (i) draft a letter to all Head Teachers of secondary Academies to establish reasons for the low number of pupils entered for Key Stage 4 GCSE RE exams; (ii) conduct a survey of all Swindon secondary schools to establish pupils views about their interest in studying RE and (iii) report further on the outcomes of research undertaken to the next meeting of SACRE.

4) That the Head of Education includes discussion on the low number of pupils entered for Key Stage 4 GCSE RE exams at the next Secondary Heads meeting on 20th April 2016.

119. Making May Matter Initiative

The SACRE Advisor reported on the Making May Matter initiative which aimed to raise the profile of RE and help schools celebrate great RE.

The SACRE noted that schools in South Gloucestershire, Bristol and Swindon were being invited to arrange an RE event over the coming months to which a SACRE member would be invited to share in the celebration of the schools RE event.

The SACRE Advisor explained that further information would be available shortly to help schools organise an event.

120. Better RE Conference - 29th January 2016

The SACRE considered a report on the South Gloucestershire and Bristol SACREs' RE Conference held on 29th January 2016 that a number of primary teachers from Swindon attended.

The Conference aimed to assist and provide teachers of RE with material and ideas to connect RE to the British Values agenda and to make learning more playful and creative. The report highlighted the positive feedback received from delegates attending the conference.

121. Website Update

The SACRE Advisor reminded SACRE members of the need to submit their profile details to Freddy Pound for inclusion on the new SACRE website.

122.

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 reminded 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.

The SACRE noted that Emma McCarthy had been appointed as the Primary Hub Leader for Swindon and it was anticipated that a Secondary Hub Leader for Swindon would be appointed soon.

123.

Feedback from RE Teachers Network Meetings

The SACRE noted that the next primary and secondary RE Teachers Network meetings had been arranged for early April 2016.

The SACRE Advisor reported on a Governor Support session held on 10th February 2016 and commented on the positive feedback received from delegates attending the session.

124.

Feedback from SACRE Representatives on other Committees

The SACRE received a report from Paul Sunners, representative on the Council's Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Mr Sunners reported on the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 2nd December 2015 and 3rd February 2016. He highlighted the main issues discussed at the meetings that were relevant to the work of SACRE, in particular (i) the Education Standards and Performance report setting out the achievements of Swindon children and young people in their public assessments in primary and secondary schools and (ii) the work of the Youth Parliament, children's safeguarding update and the restorative youth service.

The Chair thanked Mr Sunners for his report.

125.

Date and Time of the Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the SACRE would be held on Wednesday 20th July 2016, commencing at 6:00pm at a venue to be agreed.