

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

WEDNESDAY, 20 JULY 2016

PRESENT:-

Group A: Mr David Burbidge (Baptist Church), Mrs Sarah Lane Cawte (Chair and United Reformed Church), Mrs Teresa Clerck (Jewish Community), Mr Tony McAteer (Catholic Community) and Mr Dinesh Patel (Hindu Community)
Christian Denominations and Other Religions or Religious Denominations

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

Group C: Mr Paul Sunners
Teacher Organisations

Group D: Councillors Fionuala Foley, Gemma McCracken, Fay Howard, Teresa Page and Barbara Parry.
Councillors

Also in attendance: Katy Staples (SACRE Advisor) and Sarah Foulkes (School Improvement Adviser)

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Jo Backus, Reverend David Howell, Mr M S Khan Ms Catherine Lomax, Mr Gurchoran Singh Lyal, Mrs Tracy Mason, Mrs Fidelma Meehan and Mrs Lottie O'Brien.

1. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair for the Municipal Year 2016/17

Resolved – (1) That Sarah Lane Cawte be appointed Chair of the SACRE for the Municipal Year 2016/17.

(2) That Councillor Gemma McCracken be appointed Vice-Chair of the SACRE for the remainder of 2016.

2. Welcome from the Hindu Temple and Cultural Centre

Dinesh Patel welcomed the SACRE to the Hindu Temple and Cultural Centre. Following a tour of the Centre, including the Temple, Mr Patel explained that the Temple and Cultural Centre had recently opened and was the first Hindu Temple and Cultural Centre in Swindon, which gave Hindus in the Swindon area a place to meet socially and celebrate their faith. The SACRE noted that the ground floor was arranged into a number of separate meeting rooms to encourage community use of the premises and the Temple and meditation room was located on the first floor.

The Chair thanked Mr Patel for the tour of the facility and for his very warm and hospitable welcome.

3. 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.

4. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

5. Minutes and Matters Arising

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd March 2016, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Minute 121 – Website Update

The Chair reminded SACRE members of the need to submit their profile details to Mr Freddy Pound for inclusion on the new SACRE website. A template was available from Mr Pound if required.

6. Membership Update

The SACRE Clerk reminded members of Groups A, B and C of the need to respond to a request seeking confirmation of their willingness to serve on the SACRE for a further four year period and the completion of a contact details form.

The SACRE noted that the Council would be asked to confirm the membership of the SACRE Groups A, B and C at their meeting in September 2016.

7. Feedback from Conferences and Meetings

NASACRE AGM 2016 – Shaping the Future

The SACRE received a report from Mr Derek Jay, South Gloucester SACRE on the NASACRE AGM held at Central Hall, Westminster, London on 17th May 2016.

Keynote speakers included The Rt Hon Baroness Elizabeth Butler Sloss GBE and Professor Alan Dinham.

Secondary Cluster Meetings

The SACRE noted that a secondary cluster meeting was held on 19th May 2016 when 6 schools attended and considered the new Religious Education GCSE requirements and new Humanism materials.

Primary Cluster Meetings

The SACRE noted that 7 schools attended the recent primary cluster meeting, which considered subject specialism in Christianity and materials that could be used to teach Humanism.

Learn, Teach Lead RE

The SACRE welcome Mr Ed Pawson, Programme Director for Learn, Teach, Lead RE for the South West region and Mrs Emma McCarthy, Primary Hub leader for Swindon.

Mr Pawson spoke about his role as a SACRE Advisor to both Torbay and Devon Councils and the benefits of Religious Education (RE) teachers networking with other RE teachers in their area. He reminded the SACRE that the Learn, Teach Lead RE 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 model was being replicated for the Taunton / Swindon area.

The SACRE noted that Mrs McCarthy had been appointed as the Primary Hub Leader for Swindon. Mrs McCarthy highlighted the main aspects of her role, in particular to 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. She explained that Hub Leaders received 2 days training each year to help them in their role. There were 7 RE Hubs in the South West of England with discussions taking place about potential for an additional Hub in Chippenham. A successful Annual Conference was held in early July 2016 where about 60 teachers attended.

Mrs McCarthy commented on the exciting opportunity to act as Hub leader and that it was her desire to enthuse and inspire the next generation of primary and secondary RE teachers. She responded to a number of queries in relation to the implications of her role as Hub leader in working with school Governors and the opportunities for teachers to be involved with Learn, Teach, Lead RE.

Ms Katy Staples, SACRE Advisor, explained that she would be working closely with Mrs McCarthy in launching the first Hub meeting on 17th November 2016 and that Mrs McCarthy would be involved in the implementation of the new Agreed Syllabus. The SACRE noted that it was very important to build strong relationships and the need to build bridges between primary and secondary RE teachers.

The SACRE Advisor also commented on additional funding for Learn, Teach, Lead RE from the St Matthias Trust and Bristol University.

Mrs McCarthy agreed to inform the SACRE of future Hub meetings in Swindon.

8. High Court Ruling about Humanism and NASACRE and AREIAC Response

The SACRE Advisor reported on a recent High Court Ruling on Religious Education (RE) and the inclusion of Humanism, as a non-religious world view, in the study of RE at Key Stage 4 and subsequent advice of Dr Satvinder Juss, King's College, University of London.

The SACRE were advised that the Agreed Syllabus for Swindon included an element of teaching Humanism at Key Stage 2 and that guidance was being planned for Key Stage 4. The SACRE were satisfied that the Swindon Borough Council newly Agreed Syllabus complied with the Department for Education guidance issued in July 2016.

Resolved – That the guidance received from Dr Satvinder Juss be noted and the position monitored for further advice and guidance.

9. Response from Letter and Survey about Poor Exam Entry Data

The SACRE Advisor referred to a letter that had been circulated to all schools and academies in Swindon about the 2014/15 examination data for entries for public examinations in Religious Education, in which it was reported that Swindon had the lowest numbers of entries for GCSE Religious Studies nationally at 17%. The SACRE noted that this information had been drawn to the attention of all schools and academies in Swindon along with details of the Agreed Syllabus.

In order to highlight the importance of the provision of RE for all registered pupils at school Councillor Fionuala Foley explained that she would be visiting Secondary schools during September 2016 and would raise this issue and remind schools of their responsibilities in relation to the teaching of RE. In addition Mrs Sarah Foulkes, School Improvement Advisor agreed to include the issue in her discussions with schools at the upcoming Subject Network Day.

Resolved – (1) That the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Fionuala Foley, (i) highlights the importance of schools teaching RE during her visits to Secondary schools during September 2016, and (ii) circulates a letter prepared by the SACRE Advisor about the level of Religious Education being taught in schools at Key Stage 4 to all secondary schools and all Chair of Governors in Swindon.

(2) That Mrs Sarah Foulkes, School Improvement Advisor includes the issue of teaching RE in her discussions with schools at the upcoming Subject Network Day.

10. Launch of the Agreed Syllabus

The SACRE Advisor confirmed that Mr Stephen Pett and Mrs Fiona Moss from RE Today would be launching the Swindon Agreed Syllabus on 8th November 2016 at Tadpole Farm C of E Primary School.

The Chair encouraged SACRE members to attend the launch of the Agreed Syllabus and agreed that the programme and format for the launch would be circulated to SACRE members in due course.

Mrs Sarah Foulkes, School Improvement Advisor asked for details of the schools invited to the launch and agreed to encourage their attendance. The SACRE Advisor commented on the Syllabus and that it would be tailored to meet Swindon needs. The SACRE were asked to provide a number of appropriate images of children from Swindon schools to include in the Syllabus.

11. SACRE Representation on Other Committees

The Chair advised the SACRE that, following a review of the Co-opted members of Swindon Borough Council committees, the Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee had agreed to streamline the number of co-optee's on their Committee. As there were already five members on the Committee who would be able to represent the views of SACRE it was agreed not to appoint a co-optee from the SACRE at this time.

The Chair thanked Paul Sunners for representing the SACRE on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and for the sterling work he has undertaken on behalf of the SACRE over the years.

12. Paul Sunners

The SACRE was informed that this would be Mr Paul Sunners (Group C) last SACRE meeting representing the NAHT and that a new NAHT representative was being sought.

The Chair, on behalf of the SACRE thanked Mr Sunners for his commitment, contribution, support and engagement as a member of SACRE over the years. The Chair wished Mr Sunners all the best for the future and explained that his contribution at SACRE meetings will be sorely missed.

13. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the SACRE would be held on Tuesday, 1st November 2016, commencing at 6:00pm. It was suggested that Tadpole Farm C of E Primary School be considered as a potential venue for this meeting.

Mr Tony McAteer offered the use of Holy Cross Primary School for the meeting of the SACRE on Tuesday 7th March 2017.