

## STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TUESDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 2020

PRESENT:-

**Group A:** David Burbidge (Baptist Church), Malkrit Babbra  
Christian Denominations and (Buddhist Community), Jo Backus (Buddhist  
Other Religions or Religious Community), Dinesh Patel (Hindu Community) and  
Denominations Reverend David Howell (Swindon Evangelical  
Alliance)

**Group B:** Ruth Williams and Reverend Clive Deverell  
Church of England

**Group C:** Tracy Mason, Lottie O'Brien and Emma McCarthy  
Teacher Organisations

**Group D:** Councillors Fay Howard, Matthew Courtliff and  
Councillors Imtiyaz Shaikh

Also in attendance: Katy Staples (SACRE Advisor) and Gareth Cheal  
(Interim SEND Lead)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Garry Perkins and Oladapo Ibitoye along with members Helen Redhead, Sarah Stewart, Clare-Marie Burchall, Atiff Ghafar, Michelle Howard and Steve Bogg.

### 1. **Declarations of Interest**

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interest in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

### 2. **Public Question Time**

There were no public questions.

### 3. **Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, be confirmed as a correct record.

### 4. **Agreed syllabus review process**

The SACRE Advisor confirmed that SACRE has a statutory obligation to review its Agreed Syllabus and to convene an Agreed Syllabus Working Party every 5 years. She advised that she had contacted the Senior Primary Commissioner regarding this matter and was waiting for confirmation regarding the allocation of a budget. Garth Cheal confirmed that the budget allocation request was being submitted to the Schools Forum in January 2021.

The SACRE Advisor asked for volunteers to sit on the working party being set up to review the syllabus and the following agreed to assist: Councillor Shaikh, Ruth Williams, Jo Backus, Tracy Mason, Dinish Patel and Lottie O'Brien. She confirmed that surveys, including virtual ones, had been issued and once responses were received, the working party will analyse the results and the next course of action will be agreed. She advised that she had been in negotiations with RE Today Services about the potential costing for a renewed licence for the current RE syllabus. Members noted that there will be an extra SACRE meeting in April/ May 2021. This will also be an Agreed Syllabus Conference where the working group will present its findings and group determine the next course of action.

Resolved – (1) That a working group be set up to review the RE syllabus.

(2) That an Agreed Syllabus Conference meeting be set up in April/ May 2021.

## **5. Collective Worship/ Assemblies under current restrictions**

Mr Burbidge advised that the Baptist church had produced a programme for the Christmas term suitable for Year 5/6 children and was called Christmas Unwrapped. Mrs McCarthy referred to assemblies recorded by the Swindon Evangelical church that she was using as lesson aids. Mrs O'Brien referred to teaching aids for secondary schools. Members heard that guidance circulated in the agenda focused on primary school collective worship and noted that it would be beneficial to have similar information made available for secondary schools. The SACRE Advisor confirmed that she will collate the available supportive information from various churches and organisations, and following feedback from Mrs O'Brien and Mrs Stewart, will circulate to schools.

Resolved – That the SACRE Advisor be requested to compose and circulate guidance on worship to primary and secondary schools.

## **6. National Updates for RE**

The SACRE Advisor informed the group about the impact of the Commission on Religious Education report. Understanding the meaning of world views was important and the debate regarding diversity in religious opinions had to be encouraged within and across different religious and non-religious groups. She referred to the effect on curriculum design and how the Religious Education Council has commissioned an academic literature review and guidance for agreed syllabus conferences for SACRE on how to design a new syllabus. Members noted that RE Today Services were proposing to write a syllabus to encompass the teaching of world views. Members further noted that RE syllabi will be different in five years' time.

The SACRE Advisor confirmed that the number of student undertaking RE at GCSE level was comparative to previous years and in the "A Level" setting, it compared well with other Humanities subjects. She also advised that a new Welsh RE curriculum will come into effect from September 2022 and will be called Religion, Values and Ethics.

The SACRE Advisor drew the groups' attention to the availability of training by Farmington Fellowship for RE Teachers in respect of subject knowledge and pedagogical expertise. The group also noted the provision of new materials for schools from free churches and the National Association of Teachers of RE.

Resolved – That the SACRE Advisor be requested to circulate links to resources to primary and secondary schools headteachers.

## **7. Feedback from online RE Hub meeting held on 10th November 2020**

SACRE received an update from Emma McCarthy, Hub Leader, about the recent RE Hub meeting. The Hub Leader explained that the virtual meeting was well attended by both primary and secondary schools. She confirmed that the session focused on anti-racism and advised that the SACRE Advisor gave a presentation regarding the Black Lives Matter movement. This helped members focus their thoughts on future RE planning material. There was also a discussion on the agreed syllabus and members agreed to meet again during the next scholastic term. Members noted that there were quite a number of new RE teachers attending who were interested in the new RE syllabus being proposed. The Hub Leader referred them to a course being undertaken by the SACRE Advisor and her colleague, Adam Robertson.

Resolved – That the feedback from Hub meetings be noted.

## **8. Any Other Business**

Members noted the following:

- That the SACRE Advisor was now also advising Wiltshire SACRE.
- That due to Covid-19, the school websites review would not be undertaken this scholastic year.
- The Dillington Conference usually held at Dillington House, Ilminster, Somerset will now be held virtually on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021.
- That the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Annual Religious Education Conference 2021 that will be held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 and this will also be held virtually on the 29<sup>th</sup> January.

Resolved – That Mrs McCarthy be requested to circulate the flyer for the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Annual Religious Education Conference 2021.

## **9. Date and Time of the Next Meeting**

Next meeting is due to be held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 6.00 p.m. Members of the SACRE were asked to suggest venues or indicate where this meeting should be held.