

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TUESDAY, 26 JUNE 2018

Group A:
Christian Denominations and
Other Religions or Religious
Denominations

David Burbidge (Baptist Church)
Clare-Marie Burchall

Group B:
Church of England

Ruth Williams and Janet French

Group C:
Teacher Organisations

Tracy Mason and Emma McCarthy

Group D:
Councillors

Councillors Fay Howard, Barbara Parry and
Roger Smith

Also in attendance:

Jo Garton representing Humanists Group

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Matthew Courtliff and Nick Martin and from Malkit Babbra, Jo Backus, Atiff Ghafar, Michelle Howard, The Reverends David Howell and Norma McKemey, Lottie O'Brien and Dinesh Patel.

1. Appointment of Chair

Resolved – That Councillor Fay Howard be Chair of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education for the Municipal Year 2018/19.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chair

Resolved – That the appointment of Vice-Chair be deferred to the next meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interest in any matters to be considered at the meeting.

Councillor Barbara Parry made a personal, non-prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of all Agenda items on the grounds of her employment by Ridgeway School.

4. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

5. Chair's Announcements

The SACRE discussed membership of the Committee and agreed that the Committee's cohort was full.

Resolved – That the SACRE Advisor contacts Mandy Sandleton to enquire if she would like to continue representing National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) on SACRE.

6. Welcome to new members

The Chair welcomed Malkit Babbra (Sikh Community), Clare-Marie Burchall (Roman Catholic Community) and Atiff Ghafar (Muslim Community) to the committee.

7. Brief talk from the Mosque representative

Mr Waseem Shahzad (Al-Babib Trustee), welcomed SACRE members to the Al-Habib Islamic Centre. He remarked there were currently 250 members who attended the Centre during various festivities and that the Centre was also used as a community hub for children and young people where they were able to undertake Islamic religious education. It also gave them the opportunity to play games, including football. Mr Shahzad referred to the links with the Harbour Project in Swindon and elaborated on the work undertaken by the Centre to support Muslims within the community. The SACRE members noted that the centre was also available for hire by the wider community.

The Chair thanked Mr Shahzad for the use of the facility and for his very warm and hospitable welcome.

Resolved - That the Committee officer be requested to circulate Mr Shahzad's e-mail address to the SACRE members so that they could promote the availability of the Centre.

8. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 26th March 2018, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

9. Matters Arising

Feedback from the Annual report

Ms Katy Staples, SACRE Advisor, reported that she had received exam data regarding Religions Education from the Council and that this would be incorporated in the SACRE annual report being sent to the National Association Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (NASACRE). She explained that this information was gathered nationally by other SACREs and would provide a picture on Religious Education in schools within England and Wales.

Resolved – That the SACRE advisor circulate a copy of the final report to members.

Feedback regarding the Collective Worshiping support

Ms Katy Staples, SACRE Advisor, confirmed that a training session regarding collective worship in schools will be organised for Headteachers in the

autumn. The aim of the session, entitled “Time to Breathe”, was to inspire, inform and provide resources for Headteachers, enabling them to lead assemblies that will leave children and young people with a greater sense of calm, meaning and engagement to make the world a better place.

Resolved – That the Head of Education be requested to set up a breakfast meeting with the Chairs of the Swindon Association of Primary Headteachers, the Swindon Association of Secondary Headteachers and Association of Swindon Special Schools Headteachers to discuss collective worshiping support for schools. This will be undertaken by May 2019.

10. Vice Chair legal developments - election of a vice chair

Ms Katy Staples, SACRE Advisor, explained that Ms Jo Garton was a co-opted member of SACRE and in that capacity, did not have voting rights.

Ms Staples reported that on 3rd May, the Welsh Assembly agreed that Humanist would be included in Group A. As this was a Welsh decision, it did not have any legal status in England. She explained that NASACRE was lobbying to ensure equality between the Welsh and English systems by allowing Humanists to become part of Group A.

Jo Garton addressed the SACRE and explained the reasons why she volunteered to be vice-chair. She advised that she appreciated the predicament the SACRE was in, given the ruling referred to above regarding the inclusion of Humanists in Group A and agreed to defer pursuing the matter to a later date. She explained at her next course of action was to lobby Mr Robert Buckland, QC, MP until this matter was resolved.

Resolved – That Emma McCarthy be appointed Vice Chair for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2018/19

11. Feedback from the Religious Education hub meetings and forthcoming LTLRE conference

The SACRE received an update from Emma McCarthy, Hub Leader, about the RE Hub meetings. The Hub Leader explained that there were no meetings held since the last SACRE meeting but circulated information on the three previous meetings that were held at Commonweal School, Orchid Vale School and the Al-Habib Islamic Centre at Gorse Hill. The Hub Leader also reported that a) Jo Garton would be attending primary and secondary schools in September to inform staff on Humanism, b) a Facebook page was being set up in Swindon for RE teachers, with the aim of creating a supportive network and c) that the Learn, Teach, Lead RE conference was being held on the 28th June 2018 in Bath.

12. Local Radio coverage about RE and SACRE

The SACRE listened to a voice recording of students from Peatmoor School debating with their teaching assistant, Sarah Williams on the reasons for learning about religion and the various mediums used in the school. Jo Garton referred to the discussions she had with the children and advised that whilst Peatmoor was a Community school, the students had a strong ethical and religious outlook.

The SACRE also discussed ways of promoting the “Diversity and Religion

Belief: A guidance and resources pack for primary schools in England and Wales” and agreed that it would be beneficial if this resource was promoted through the Hub meetings.

13. Website compliance checking

Ms Katy Staples, SACRE Advisor, thanked members for their contribution in gathering data on the schools’ compliance to publish data on the provision of religious education on their website. She confirmed that Ofsted had confirmed that information should be made available on schools’ website.

Resolved – That the Advisor offer members a “top sheet of instructions” and SACRE members return their completed forms to the SACRE Advisor by 15th September 2018.

14. Date and Time of the Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the SACRE would be held on 4th December 2018 commencing at 6.00 p.m. at Crowdy’s Hill School, Jefferies Avenue, Swindon SN2 7HJ.