

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

MONDAY, 26 MARCH 2018

PRESENT:-

Group A: Mr David Burbidge (Baptist Church), Reverend Christian Denominations and David Howell (Swindon Evangelical Alliance), Mr Other Religions or Religious M S Khan (Muslim Community) and Mr Dinesh Denominations Patel (Hindu Community)

Group B: Reverend Clive Deverell and Reverend Norma Church of England McKemey

Group C: Mrs Tracy Mason and Mrs Emma McCarthy Teacher Organisations

Group D: Councillors Fionuala Foley, Fay Howard and Councillors Gary Sumner

Also in attendance: Jo Garton representing Humanists group

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barbara Parry and Matthew Courtliff and from Jo Backus, Fidelma Meehan, Peter Nathan, Mr Gurchoran Singh Lyal, Janet French, Tony McAteer and Michelle Howard.

22. Brief talk from Gateway representative

Councillor Fay Howard welcomed the SACRE to the Gateway Church.

Councillor Howard advised that she had been attending the Gateway Church for the past eight years and the Church welcomed a large congregation at services every Sunday. It was noted that the Church had another premises at Dorcan.

In response to a question regarding the premises, Councillor Howard confirmed that the Gateway Church was located on the old Bible Society site which now also included a food bank and the Gateway Furniture warehouse, where the community was able to purchase furniture at a reduced price. The SACRE noted that customers were able to buy furniture which is stored in a warehouse but could be viewed from photographs on line and from a shop in the town centre.

23. Brief remembrance of Steph Muddin

The SACRE took time at the start of the meeting to remember Steph Muddin, who had served as a member of the SACRE since June 2006 and who died on 19th February 2018. Katy Staples, SACRE Advisor, led the tributes to Steph and referred to the well-attended funeral service held for her. A candle of remembrance was lit and members of the SACRE also paid tribute to Steph for her passion and work with children that included doing craft activities about themes studied in religious education. The SACRE heard that children at St Francis Church of England School

would greatly miss her commitment to their well-being. Steph was welcoming and generous to people, and with a strength of character, authenticity and commitment to the SACRE. The SACRE then observed a few moments of silence in remembrance.

24. 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.

25. Public Question Time

No public questions were asked or submitted for this meeting.

26. Election of Vice-Chair

The SACRE discussed group membership and agreed it should be more inclusive of other faiths and religions. The Committee was advised that prior to any group expansion, a review of its Constitution would be required to ensure compliance with all required regulations.

Resolved – That the Clerk of the SACRE liaise with Katy Staples, SACRE Advisor, regarding the need for any amendment of the SACRE Constitution for submission to Full Council on 17th May 2018.

27. Chair's Announcements

The Chair confirmed that a card of remembrance for Steph Mordin would be circulated. The Chair further advised that a card for Stuart Figini would be circulated as he has left Swindon Borough Council and was now working at Wiltshire Council.

28. Minutes

Resolved -That the minutes of the meeting held on 5th December 2017, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

- (1) Commission on Religious Education – Draft Response – Minute 8/17

The Chair confirmed that she had received a response from local MPs and this would be circulated prior to the next meeting.

Resolved – The Chair to circulate the letter to the SACRE members.

- (2) SACRE representatives

Resolved – That the Clerk contact Church of England and Clifton Dioceses regarding future Committee representation, following the passing of Steph Mordin and retirement of Tony McAteer.

29.

Annual report

The SACRE received its draft Annual Report covering the period September 2016 to August 2017.

The Annual Report covered the following points:

- SACRE's funding and administration issues.
- Agreed syllabus for RE in Swindon.
- Support for schools through advising, training teachers and governors in RE.
- Launch of the agreed RE syllabus.
- Best Practice Forum.
- Learn, Teach, Lead RE.
- Monitoring of RE Provision in Swindon.
- Public examination results.
- Statutory Matters.
- Attendance by SACRE members at outside events.
- Membership.

In response to a question regarding the GCSE results, the SACRE noted that Key Stage 4 data included in the report did not include the UTC Swindon, Dorcan, Lawn Manor, Swindon Academy and the special schools as they had no entries for RE examinations. The SACRE voiced its concerns on the contact time and subject content pupils had for RE education at Key Stages 3 and 4 and agreed to contact the relevant schools regarding this issue. Members further noted that not all schools indicated on their website that RE was included in the curriculum.

The SACRE Advisor confirmed that Governor training was undertaken in February 2018 and was focused on the governor's responsibility to monitor the statutory requirement for collective worship in their schools.

The SACRE was informed the Annual Report, once finalised, would be submitted to the National Association of SACREs with a copy to all schools and academies.

Resolved – (1) That the SACRE Advisor be requested to write to Headteachers and Chair of Trustees of the schools not included in the Key Stage 4 data of the report to enquire how they were complying with pupil's entitlement to studying RE.

(2) That the draft SACRE Annual Report be approved, subject to typographical amendments identified at the meeting or that might be identified in proof checking and that the SACRE Advisor be authorised to finalise the report and submit it to the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE).

(3) That the draft Annual Report be forwarded to all schools and academies in Swindon to heighten the awareness of the Swindon SACRE work within the borough.

(4) That the SACRE Advisor be thanked for her work in the preparation of the Annual Report.

30.

Feedback from the Collective Worship working party

The SACRE considered a report from the Collective Worship working party. The SACRE commented on the structure of the report and welcomed the revised

format, particularly "Time to Breathe" as it captured the essence of the information provided.

The SACRE welcomed the training on collective worship already provided by the SACRE Advisor to teachers and the Committee discussed how best to circulate the Collective Worship working party feedback to schools.

In response to a question regarding pupils' non-attendance at collective worship sessions, it was noted that this differed between schools and also needed to reflect parents' wishes.

Resolved – (1) That the SACRE Advisor liaise with Sarah Foulkes, Commissioner of Education, regarding Collective Worship working party feedback to schools and their Chair of Governors.

(2) That the SACRE Advisor be requested to offer schools the opportunity to train teachers in undertaking collective worship classes in school.

(3) That the SACRE Advisor be requested to circulate the Collective Worship working party feedback to appropriate venues, including the Hub.

31. Website compliance checking - a proposal.

The SACRE considered the SACRE Advisor's report regarding a schools' legal requirement to teach RE and publish the curriculum on their website. Katy Staples, SACRE Advisor, referred to a form utilised by Bath and North East Somerset Council highlighting the availability of information regarding RE on schools' websites. She requested the SACRE members browse relevant schools' websites and complete the forms to be circulated to members.

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

32. Feedback from the Religious Education hub meetings

The SACRE received an update from Emma McCarthy, Hub Leader, about the recent RE Hub meetings. The Hub Leader explained that two meetings had been held since the last SACRE meeting. On the 25th January 2018, Rabbi Spiel attended Orchid Vale School where he displayed religious artefacts and spoke about Jewish faith and festivals. In early February, a meeting was held at the Al-Habib Islamic Centre in Gorse Hill. Atiff Ghafar, a representative from the Centre, gave members a tour of the premises and a talk about the Islamic faith. The Hub Leader explained that both primary and secondary school teachers attended both meetings.

The SACRE noted that a meeting would be held on the 18th April 2018 at Orchid Vale School where the new agreed RE syllabus would be discussed. Another meeting was scheduled to be undertaken during the summer term and it was noted that the subject was yet to be agreed.

Jo Garton advised the SACRE that on the 5th March 2018, she attended a conference for South West SACRE members where Stephen Pett gave a talk entitled "Examining the 'Nones': Handling diversity of unbelief in the RE classroom" where the teaching of a secular world view was discussed.

The SACRE Advisor updated the Committee on RE presentations given at the January Teachers conference in Bristol. The SACRE noted that a large number of Swindon teachers attended the conference. Members were advised that another conference organised by the LTLRE programme was scheduled in Bath during the summer term and they had the opportunity to take advantage of discounted accommodation if an overnight stay was required.

The Chair and the SACRE Advisor, on behalf of the Swindon SACRE, thanked Emma McCarthy for organising regular meetings to support and further develop RE teachers in Swindon.

The SACRE noted that Fidelma Meehan had previously been involved in the provision of tranquillity zones at primary school and further promotion of this concept was to be sought in schools.

Resolved – (1) That the feedback from Hub meetings be noted.

(2) That Jo Garton, SACRE member, set up a meeting with Emma McCarthy, Hub Leader, to discuss preparing resources to help RE co-ordinators teach on a secular world view.

(3) That Emma McCarthy, Hub Leader, be requested to:

- a) Circulate further information on upcoming conferences.
- b) Liaise with Fidelma Meehan regarding her attendance at a future Hub meeting.
- c) Liaise with Fidelma Meehan regarding the promotion of tranquillity zones in schools.

33. Date and Time of the Next Meeting

The dates for the meetings of the SACRE in 2018/19 have yet to be finalised. The SACRE will be advised of the proposed dates after these have been confirmed at Full Council on 18th May 2018.