

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TUESDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2019

PRESENT:-

Group A: Christian Denominations and Other Religions or Religious Denominations	David Burbidge (Baptist Church) Clare-Marie Burchall (Roman Catholic Community) Dinesh Patel (Hindu Community) Malkit Babbra (Sikh Community) Atiff Ghafar (Muslim Community)
Group B: Church of England	Reverend Norma McKemey Ruth Williams
Group C: Teacher Organisations	Lottie O'Brien Emma McCarthy Helen Redhead
Group D: Councillors	Councillors Fay Howard and Nick Martin

Also in attendance: Katy Staples (SACRE Advisor), Steve Bogg (Senior Primary Commissioner), Emma Ainslie-King (, Head of Religion, Philosophy and Ethics).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Matthew Courtliff and Reverend David Howell, Jo Backus, Michelle Howard and Jo Garton.

12. Welcome from the Chair

The Chair welcomed members of the SACRE to Commonweal School and advised this was the last meeting of this calendar year. The Chair thanked Emma Ainslie-King, Head of Religion, Philosophy and Ethics at the school for inviting the committee. Mrs Ainslie-King commenced the meeting by referring to her experience of teaching Religious Education (RE) at the school. She confirmed the school taught RE at Key Stages 3 and 4 and following a consultation with students that was undertaken every three years, the school was aware students enjoyed the subject and would pursue it to achieve a qualification. She responded to members' questions regarding RE topics pupils studied at GCSE and A level and how the school approached interfaith themes.

The Chair also thanked Emma McCarthy and Jo Garton for presenting the WIRE Awards at Eldene and Greenmeadow Schools. Emma McCarthy referred to the activities undertaken when she presented the award during the assembly at Eldene Primary School. Members noted the local press had also covered the award presentation at Eldene Primary School.

Resolved – (1) That Mrs Ainslie-King be thanked for her interesting presentation.
(2) That Emma McCarthy and Jo Backus be thanked for presenting the WIRE Awards at Eldene and Greenmeadow Schools.

13. 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.

14. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

15. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd July 2019, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

16. Minutes from Key Stage 4 Working Party

The SACRE Advisor stated that following the last SACRE meeting, there were still concerns some schools were not offering any Religious Education (RE) at Key Stage 3, particularly when they were not offering the subject at Key Stage 4. This was a national trend as the number of entrants to RE exams has been going down over the past years. She referred to actions being taken by Bristol SACRE, which was offering schools in Bristol an RE curriculum for Key Stage 4 pupils. The course covering six out of nine topics was to be undertaken over a two year period and was offered as part of a non-examined subject in a pool with PSHE and Careers. This course was to ensure schools provided a broad and balanced study covering the core disciplines of RE, mainly theology, philosophy and social sciences. The SACRE Advisor elaborated on the topics to be covered and confirmed that some of them may be amended to reflect Swindon community base. SACRE noted that currently the main religions being studied in the Bristol and Swindon areas were Christianity, Islam and Buddhism.

SACRE discussed the minutes of the Bristol SACRE meeting held on 9th October 2019 as these provided further information on the proposal and agreed that this was an option that could be offered to Swindon schools. Members further agreed that the topics for study were balanced and would promote constructive discussions during RE lessons.

SACRE discussed the difference in the study programmes for GCSE and A Level examinations and how the changes into the Ofsted assessing regime affected schools' league tables.

Resolved – (1) That the SACRE Advisor be requested to:

- a) Discuss the new RE proposals at the next hub meeting.
- b) Update members at the next SACRE meeting on Bristol's implementation of the proposals.

17. Questions for RE Curriculum Leaders to consider (New Ofsted 2019)

The SACRE Advisor referred to the questions Religious Education (RE) curriculum leaders would consider in their preparation for an Ofsted inspection. This related to the quality of RE leadership in schools. SACRE discussed some schools'

perception of RE teachers and how this may influence the take up of RE by students, particularly when no final exams were undertaken. Members discussed how a “deep dive” into subjects prior to Ofsted inspections would identify how RE influenced other subjects. Members agreed that the questions being considered were relevant for curriculum leaders in other subjects and that it would be helpful if schools were offered this extra support. The SACRE Advisors proposed to discuss this further with hub members at their next meeting.

Resolved – That the SACRE Advisor draft responses to some of the questions recommended for RE curriculum leaders preparing for Ofsted inspections in order for the hub members to consider at their next meeting.

18. Wire Award Gold 2019

A Widening Inclusivity in Religious Education (WIRE) Award certificate was circulated at the meeting for SACRE members to view. A folder of evidence for the award submitted by St Francis CofE Primary School was also circulated. The SACRE Advisor confirmed that Eldene and Greenmeadow schools were awarded the WIRE Award this year and St Francis CofE School would be presented with its award certificate shortly. She confirmed that schools were only able to display the certificate for three years and as such, were encouraged to gather evidence for submission to attain credits for the WIRE Award “Gold”. The SACRE Advisor drew members’ attention to the different criteria school had to meet between the original and enhanced WIRE Award.

SACRE noted some members’ concerns regarding the feasibility of meeting all the objectives set out to achieve the WIRE Award “Gold”. The Senior Primary Commissioner drew members’ attention to the use of technology in the classroom and how through YouTube 360 and Facebook 360, pupils may experience a virtual reality visit of various religious places of worship. The SACRE Adviser confirmed that the criteria required a physical visit to a place of worship as this gave pupils the opportunity to meet a practitioner of the faith on the premises who would be able to answer any questions they had.

Resolve – (1) That the SACRE Advisor inform the schools who have already attained the WIRE Award regarding the opportunity to work towards attaining the WIRE Award “Gold”.

(2) That the SACRE Advisor promotes the South West Conference for SACRE due to be held on 2nd March 2020 at Dillington House, Ilminster, Somerset.

(3) That further to (2) above, the SACRE Advisor launches the WIRE Award “Gold” at the conference.

(4) That the SACRE Advisor launches the WIRE “Gold” award at the hub meeting in March 2020.

(5) That Emma McCarthy be requested to present the WIRE Award to St Francis CofE School.

19. Feedback from the Hub meetings

SACRE received an update from Emma McCarthy, Hub Leader, about the recent RE Hub meeting. The Hub Leader explained that both primary and secondary schools attended the meeting. She confirmed that Adam Robertson, SACRE Advisor in Bristol attended and spoke about Islam. Members noted that Adam worked at a school for part of the week and was able to share the work he was

doing with his pupils with those attending the hub session.

Other highlights from the meeting included:

- Noting that a meeting had been organised for secondary teachers to meet the Religious Education Leader at Bradon Forest.
- That the SACRE Advisor would be attending the next hub meeting to discuss Ofsted.
- That arrangements would be made for Hub members to visit a place of worship during the summer term.

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

20. RE Annual Conference Flyer - January 2020

The SACRE Advisor referred to the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Annual Religious Education Conference 2020 that will be held on 31st January at the Engineers House, Bristol. She confirmed that the theme of the conference was “RE to save the planet?” and the key speaker is Fiona Moss who is currently the editor of RE Today’s Primary RE series, “Inspiring RE”.

SACRE was reminded that the annual South West Conference for SACREs was being held on Monday 2nd March 2020 at Dillington House, Ilminster, Somerset. The theme for the conference was “SACRE Futures”.

Resolved – (1) That members be requested to circulate the flyers.

21. Date and Time of the Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would be on Monday, 3rd March 2020 commencing at 6.00pm in Committee Room 5, Civic Offices, Euclid Street, Swindon.