

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TUESDAY, 8 MARCH 2005

PRESENT:-

Group A: Councillors	Councillors Andrew Bennett, Maurice Fanning, Raymond Fisher and Fay Howard.
Group B: Church of England	The Venerable Alan Hawker (Chair), Mrs Catherine Coster, Mrs Penny Summers, The Venerable Alan Hawker and Mr. Paul Noble.
Group C: Teacher Organisations	Mr Andrew Fleet, Ms Norma McKemey, Mrs Tracy Mason and Mr Jonathan Young.
Group D: Other Faiths	Mr. Jaswant Singh Grewal (Sikh Community), Reverend Paul Knight (Baptist), Mr M S Khan (Muslim Community), Mr Dinesh Patel (Hindu Community), Mrs Helen Thomas (United Reformed Church) and Mrs Wendy Tucker (Methodist Church).

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Ann Ormston, Mrs Emma McCarthy, Reverend David Howell, Dr Marilyn Tew and Councillor Peter Greenhalgh.

28. Public Question Time

The following public question had been submitted in writing in accordance with Standing Order 28.

Questioner

Mrs Margaret Griffiths, Swindon Inter-Faith Group

Has the local Jewish Community been consulted about the 'Judaism' Units in the Agreed Syllabus update and received a copy of the proposals?

Will the mis-spelling of Adonai in the Wiltshire syllabus, which was carried into the Swindon syllabus, be put right at this opportunity?

Response

The Chair asked the SACRE Advisor, Catherine Coster, to respond to the questions. The answers were as follows –

The Jewish Community has not yet been consulted but will be as part of the process. The consultation with other groups outside the SACRE will be discussed later in the meeting as part of the Agreed Syllabus Update. The misspelling of *Adonai* has been corrected in the Agreed Syllabus.

29. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th December 2004 be confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of Helen Faith (Group D) as having been present at the meeting.

(Further to the minutes, Councillor Fanning apologised on behalf of the Councillor Group for the number of Councillors who had been unable to attend recent meetings of the SACRE due to conflicts in meeting appointments).

30. Report on QCA Conference and SACRE Self-Evaluation

The SACRE considered the report of the SACRE Advisor on the QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) Conference and key papers from the conference including: i) a summary of the speech by Graham Langtree (QCA) on the national framework; ii) notes from Barbara Wintersgill (HMI) on the Ofsted report of SACREs; iii) a summary of discussions at the conference; and iv) a draft version of 'SACREs and Self-Evaluation: A Guide' prepared by QCA and Ofsted, which could be used by SACREs to monitor their work and effectiveness. The SACRE was advised that its comments on the self-evaluation guidance could be submitted to QCA and Ofsted.

Resolved – That (1) the SACRE notes the documents from the QCA Conference, including the self evaluation documentation to assess the effectiveness of SACREs; and

(2) Following the completion of the Agreed Syllabus Review in June 2005, the SACRE considers the self-evaluation documentation and how it can be used to assess the effectiveness of this SACRE.

31. Ofsted Reports

The SACRE received the latest Ofsted Reports for Hreod Parkway School, Churchfields School and Uplands School in respect of the teaching of religious education.

Resolved – That (1) the Ofsted reports in respect of Hreod Parkway School, Churchfields School and Uplands School be noted; and (2) the SACRE Advisor be requested to write to the schools on behalf of the SACRE to offer support and congratulations, and to ask if there are any ways in which the SACRE might better support the teaching of religious education.

32. Agreed Syllabus Update

The SACRE considered a report from the SACRE Advisor on progress in the preparation of the Agreed Syllabus and arrangements for the Agreed Syllabus Conference. Model schemes of work for primary schools were circulated; these were intended to assist teachers with a structured 'route-map' for choosing teaching modules for specific religions and comparative units. Mr Jonathan Young and Ms Norma McKemey reported back on the preparation of the models schemes of work for secondary schools.

Mrs Catherine Coster advised that the Agreed Syllabus Conference scheduled for 27th April 2005 was likely to be rearranged. It was agreed that in addition to SACRE Members, the Advisor should invite representatives of other known faith communities or organisations, including representatives of the Jewish community and the Islamic Awareness and Education Project.

At the last meeting and in a letter to the SACRE from Helen Thomas, concerns were raised as to whether it was appropriate for secular worldviews, such as humanism, to be included in the syllabus. A quote from 'Fitting out the Framework – How to Use the National Framework to Deliver Good Religious

Education' (Penny Thompson) was circulated to the SACRE to assist this discussion. It was suggested that there was a difference between teaching a secular worldview as a religion, which would not be favoured, and providing an understanding of the context in which faith sits within a secular society.

It was noted that the focus of the Agreed Syllabus Working Groups was to amend the existing Agreed Syllabus in the light of experience and change, rather than produce a totally new document. This approach was supported by the good standards of teaching and the confidence of teachers in the current version.

Resolved – That (1) the SACRE notes the update on the preparation of the Agreed Syllabus, and welcomes the 'route-map' model schemes of work;

(2) The SACRE notes the likely date for the Agreed Syllabus Conference of Monday 16 May at 1 pm (*subsequent to the meeting this date was amended to Monday 6 June 2005*) and that further discussion of the appropriate contents of the syllabus take place at the Conference; and

(3) The SACRE Advisor be requested to invite appropriate representatives of other religious organisations or groups outside the SACRE to attend the Agreed Syllabus Conference and make a copy of the draft syllabus available to all attendees in good time in advance of the Conference.