

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TUESDAY, 16 MARCH 2010

PRESENT:-

Group A: Councillors	Councillor Fay Howard
Group B: Church of England	Ms Norma McKemey, Ms Steph Mundin and Mrs Penny Summers
Group C: Teacher Organisations	Jo Garton (Vice Chair in the Chair), David Easter, Janet French, Jo Garton, Mrs Tracy Mason and Mrs Helen Miller
Group D: Other Faiths	Reverend David Howell (Swindon Evangelical Alliance), Mr M S Khan (Muslim Community), Mr Dinesh Patel (Hindu Community), Mrs Wendy Tucker (Methodist Church) and Mr Mark Cawte (URC and Methodist Church - Deputy)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: - Ms Katy Staples (SACRE Adviser)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Doreen Dart, Councillor Michael Bray, Councillor Mavis Childs, Councillor Raymond Fisher, Mr. Paul Noble, Reverend Arthur Woo, Miss Anne Wang, Mr Malkit Singh Virk and Mr Arun Bedi.

30. **Declarations of Interest**

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

31. **Public Question Time**

No public questions were received during the meeting.

32. **Chair's Announcements**

The Vice-Chair updated the SACRE in respect of the following matters: -

- The latest edition of SACRE News were circulated with the Agenda. The SACRE asked the SACRE Advisor to submit an item for a future edition on the Face to Faith Project.
- The Vice-Chair invited members of the SACRE to contact the Clerk if they wished to nominate items for future agendas.

33. **Minutes**

Resolved – 1) That the minutes for the meeting held on 1st December 2009, be confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to a correction to the attendance list to include Jo Garton in Group C and to delete Mrs Emma McCarthy from attending as part of Group C.

2) That further to Minute 27, the SACRE note that the General Code of Conduct for teachers was in existence, but agreed that it did not need to consider it further in relation to the code proposed for RE teachers.

3) That further to Minute 29, the SACRE note that Mrs Tracy Mason could no longer host a future SACRE meeting at Crowdys Hill School due to changes in her classroom space.

34. SACRE Annual Report and Development Plan

The SACRE considered in detail the draft SACRE Annual Report for September 2008 to September 2009 to be submitted to the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA). The SACRE split into work groups to provide detailed feedback on the Annual Report, which the SACRE Advisor agreed to take into account in the final version, subject to any additional changes submitted outside the meeting. The SACRE also reviewed the development plan for the SACRE for 2010/11, arising from the priorities in the Annual Report, and agreed for the SACRE Advisor to reflect their comments in the final version.

The Director of Schools and Learning attended the meeting to provide to the SACRE the context for the RE results set out in the Annual Report, and to comment on aspects of the annual report. He highlighted that it was difficult to see a trend in RE results due to the small cohort. It was reported that one school who did not offer GCSE RE this year, either short or long course, had recognised their different offering to other schools and decided to offer short course GCSE to Year 9 and full course GCSE to Year 10 next year. The SACRE were pleased to see how the annual report was able to highlight these issues to schools. The importance of RE as a subject to encourage critical thinking and communication, and as a way of promoting community cohesion was recognised, and it was agreed ways should be sought to further highlight these benefits to headteachers.

The SACRE recognised that it had a limited budget of £5k per annum, which primarily paid for the costs of the SACRE Advisor and her support to the SACRE and cluster meetings. The SACRE were keen to explore ways in which SACRE members could themselves become involved in offering their time to promote RE to schools, assisting with the development plan or training activities and asked for a report to come to their next meeting to explore these opportunities. The Director of Schools and Learning suggested that the SACRE bid for grant or other funding opportunities which would promote RE, but could also enhance teaching and learning in schools, support leadership enhancement and promote community cohesion.

Resolved– 1) That the SACRE Advisor be authorised to finalise the SACRE Annual Report 2008/2009, taking into account the comments provided by SACRE members and to submit it to the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA), including the following comments and any further submitted by SACRE members following the meeting:

- Remove the comments about specific School results from the introduction to Section 1 and place in Section 1b, providing information on the likely re-introduction of RE GCSE short and long course in one of the secondary schools next year.
- Replace the first sentence of Section 1 introduction paragraph 7 with 'Qualitative data from the Primary Schools Survey returns, showed that 80% of responders considered standards in RE were the same or rising'.
- Section 1c, the last sentence of the section 'Overview, RE has in the main continued to be delivered as a discrete subject' be moved to the start of the

second paragraph.

- In Section 5, update the first sentence to reflect that the current vacancies in the Catholic and Baptist nominations means that the SACRE membership does not currently completely reflect the religious and cultural diversity of Swindon, and to include reference to the assistance provided by Churches Together in England in seeking to assist with filling vacancies on the 'Other Faiths and Christian Denominations' Group.

2) That the SACRE Approve its Development Plan for 2010/11, subject to the following amendments:

- Inclusion of the SACRE advisor and Appropriate Representatives of the SACRE exploring the extent to which the Solihull Guidance document is used in Schools to support Foundation Stage teaching of RE.
- Inclusion of SACRE Members as responsible for assisting the SACRE advisor in the delivery of key actions.
- Amendment of SACRE 'Committees' to 'Groups'.

3) That the SACRE Advisor in conjunction with SACRE Members consider how to produce a summary version of the Annual Report to suitable to send out to schools and Councillors for next year's Annual Report, to include examples of good practice of Religious Education from the Borough sourced through cluster meetings.

4) That the SACRE Advisor bring back a report to the next meeting on ways in which SACRE members can become involved in the delivery of the Development Plan for 2010/11 and the promotion of Religious Education in School, including assisting with reviewing of the use of the Solihull support document for Foundation Stage, SACRE members visiting secondary schools to promote RE and encouraging increased survey results, and members of the SACRE and the SACRE Advisor presenting to SAPH / SASH how Religious Education can contributed to community cohesion outcomes and activities on which schools are assessed.

5) That the SACRE Advisor explore with the Director of Schools and Learning and Community Cohesion Team opportunities for grant funding or accessing other funding for the promotion of Religious Education, to support and SACRE aims.

6) That the Director of Schools and Learning provide to members of the SACRE additional information on the size of school cohorts and examination results by school.

35. National Developments for SACREs

The SACRE Advisor provided the SACRE with an update on national policy developments which had implications for the SACRE and its role.

Firstly, the SACRE noted that the Government had published the Religious Education in English Schools: Non Statutory guidance 2010. This guidance replaced elements of Circular 1/94 relating to Religious Education, but did not replace the elements of the circular related to the provision of Collective Worship.

The SACRE noted that the new Primary Curriculum had been issued during January 2010, and would be taught in schools from September 2011. This would need to be reflected in the next Swindon Agreed Syllabus review. It was recognised that the teaching of Religious Education still stood outside the main blocks of teaching required by the curriculum. However, Religious Education was now a statutory subject for all maintained schools and a programme of learning for primary religious education has been issued, with revised non-statutory guidance, which strengthened the status of Religious Education. The SACRE noted that the SACRE advisor was attending the Annual General Meeting of the National Association of

SACREs on 12th May 2010, on behalf of the Bristol SACRE, and it was recommended that the costs be shared with Swindon SACRE, for a report to come back on the outcome to a future meeting. The SACRE agreed that this was appropriate, but suggested that it might be appropriate to nominate other SACRE members to attend events necessary to the SACRE's work, to make the best use of the SACRE budget and the SACRE Advisor's time.

Resolved – 1) That the SACRE note the issue of the Religious Education in English Schools: Non Statutory guidance 2010

2) That further to 1) the Director of Law and Democratic Services be authorised in consultation with the SACRE advisor to make the appropriate changes to the SACRE's Constitution and implement any changes when seeking nominations to SACRE Groups as appropriate, and to report back to the next Committee with any key implications arising from the Guidance, including any updates to the SACRE's constitution.

3) That the SACRE note the place of Religious Education in the new Primary Curriculum.

4) That the SACRE Advisor be nominated to attend the NASACRE AGM on 12th May 2010 on behalf of the Swindon SACRE to report back to the next meeting on key outcomes.

5) That the SACRE consider sending other Members of the SACRE to future conferences or events which are necessary to support the work of the SACRE.

36.

Training Update

The SACRE heard back from two of the four members of the SACRE who had recently attended NASACRE training events.

Mr Mark Cawte had attended a training programme funded by the Department for Children, School and Families (DCSF) and Curriculum Cohesion Unit to build SACRE capacity. The training involved two days, one focused on RE and one on collective worship. In between the training days, delegates were invited to attend a local SACRE meeting of their choice, and make an accompanied visit to a school to see an RE Lesson. Mark Cawte confirmed that the training had been very useful in exploring best practice from other SACREs and exploring the law as to what a SACRE should do, and what makes an effective SACRE. One such idea was the publication of the Annual Report in a summary form which had been discussed as part an earlier agenda item.

Mr MS Khan reported back from attending a one-day SACRE conference. He advised that he had learnt much in relation to the history of SACREs and collective worship and information about other faiths. He had already been able to use his new knowledge in relation to teaching he carries out with local muslim children, and highly commended the conference for offering the opportunity to broaden understanding.

It was noted that Mr Arun Bedi and Mr Arthur Woo who also attended the respective courses would be invited to report back at the next meeting.

Resolved – That the SACRE note the training update.

37.

Feedback from Network Meetings

The SACRE Advisor presented an update to the meeting on the recent Network Meetings. The SACRE were pleased to note that the Secondary Network meeting on 3 February 2010 had been very useful and better attended, and that the next meeting would be on 16th June 2010 at the Sikh Gurdwara. In addition, there

was a full day's Secondary Conference on 10th June 2010 which would be held jointly with Wiltshire Secondary RE colleagues. The Primary Network meeting was also meeting at the Sikh Gurdwara on 18th March 2010.

Resolved - That the report on the Network Meetings be noted.

38. Understanding Faith

Resolved – That the update from Reverend David Howell on his faith be deferred to a future meeting.

39. Date and Time of the Next Meeting

The Clerk to the SACRE advised the provisional dates for the meetings of the SACRE in 2010/11 but that these were not yet confirmed. It was agreed that the SACRE should continue to meet on a Tuesday at 6 pm as a general rule.

Resolved – 1) That the Clerk to the SACRE write to all the Members of the SACRE to advise meeting dates for 2010/2011 when finalised.

2) That the Clerk to the SACRE arrange for the next meeting to be held at a local Place of Worship.