

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TUESDAY, 15 JUNE 2010

PRESENT:-

Group A: Councillors	Councillors Doreen Dart, Junab Ali and Michael Bray
Group B: Church of England	Mrs Penny Summers and Reverend Arthur Woo
Group C: Teacher Organisations	Mrs Tracy Mason and Mrs Helen Miller
Group D: Other Faiths	Mrs Helen Hancox (United Reformed Church) and Mr Mark Cawte (United Reformed Church & Methodist - Deputy)

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Raymond Fisher, Ms Norma McKemey, Mr. Paul Noble, Janet French, Jo Garton, Miss Anne Wang, Reverend David Howell, Mr Malkit Singh Virk and Mr Arun Bedi.

1. **Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair for Municipal Year 2010/11**

Resolved – 1) That Councillor Doreen Dart be appointed as the Chair of the SACRE for the 2010/11 municipal year.

2) That Ms Jo Garton be appointed as Vice-Chair of the SACRE for the 2010/11 municipal year.

2. **Welcome to New Members of the SACRE and Membership Update**

The Chair welcomed new members of the SACRE to the meeting.

The Chair advised that the Clerk had received a resignation from Mr Paul Noble from Group B (Church of England Group). Mrs Penny Summers advised that Mrs Anne Wang had also advised that she had stepped down from Group C (Teacher Organisations Group).

Resolved – That the Clerk write to Mr Paul Noble and Mrs Anne Wang to thank them for their work on the SACRE.

2) That the Clerk and SACRE advisor seek alternative representatives for the vacancies in Group B and Group C of the SACRE.

3. **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.

4. **Public Question Time**

No public questions were received during the meeting.

5. **Minutes**

Resolved – 1) That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th March 2010 be

confirmed and signed as a correct record.

2) Further to Minute 36, the SACRE noted the report from Reverend Arthur Woo on the excellent training he had received from NASACRE on the role of SACRE Members and the importance of being focused on the children who were being taught RE.

3) Further to Minute 39, the SACRE noted that it had not been possible to secure an external venue for this meeting but the Clerk would be seeking suitable alternative venues for other meetings during the year.

6. Chair's Correspondence and Announcements

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

- 1) The Chair presented Mr Mark Cawte with his certificate for attending NASACRE Training in April 2010. The Clerk would send the certificate for Arun Bedi out to him direct.
- 2) A copy of a letter which had been sent to the Group Director for Children and SACRE Chair from the British Humanist Association was noted and would be the subject to a further report in due course. The SACRE noted that the legislation was not currently in place for the SACRE to consider adding a Humanist to Group A as was requested. If the legislation changed, then humanism would need to be considered against the relative size of other faiths or non-faiths in the Swindon area before a representative could be included. It was noted that the SACRE could co-opt a Humanist representative onto the SACRE if it wished to do so, but that representative would not have voting rights. It was noted that one of the current teacher representatives with full voting rights was able to represent humanist views informally, and these contributions were welcomed.
- 3) The Chair advised that Ofsted had just published 'Transforming Religious Education' an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of RE in primary and secondary schools. Key issues would be highlighted by the SACRE advisor as part of Agenda Item 10 later on in the agenda, and it would be part of a report to the next meeting. Given the significance of the report, it was agreed that the Clerk should send an electronic or hard copy of the report and a summary to all Members of the SACRE.

7. Implementing the SACRE Development Plan 2010/11

The SACRE at its last meeting had approved its Development Plan and asked for a report back on ways in which SACRE Members might become involved in the delivery of the plan. The SACRE now considered the report and agreed which representatives might assist.

Resolved – 1) That the areas set out in paragraph 2.2 of the Agenda Report be supported, and the following Members of the SACRE be requested to assist with these areas:

Area a) – Penny Summers and Janet French (subject to her confirmation)

Area b) – Jo Garton assisted by Sarah Foulkes (School Improvement Advisor) (subject to their confirmation)

Area c) – Mark Cawte and Helen Miller

Area d) – Mark Cawte

Area e) – Members to be identified.

Area f) – Reverend Arthur Woo.

2) That other Members of the SACRE be requested to advise the Clerk if

they would like to volunteer to assist in any of the areas of focus set out in paragraph 2.2 of the agenda report.

8. Religious Education in English Schools - Non Statutory Guidance 2010

The SACRE received a report and summary of the Religious Education in English Schools – Non Statutory Guidance 2010. The members discussed the extent to which this SACRE performed against the 'Checklist for an effective partnership between an LA and its SACRE / ACS'. Many of the areas discussed for further action had been identified for action as part of the SACRE Development Plan, including resourcing the SACRE, seeking for better intelligence as to the quality of teaching of RE in Swindon, SACRE having a consistent vision of its role, and encouraging School Governors to check the quality of RE in their schools.

In addition, the SACRE received its Constitution which had been updated as a result of the Guidance, and considered whether further amendments were required.

Resolved – 1) That Council be recommended to approve the updated SACRE Constitution attached at Appendix 1 to the Agenda Report.

2) That the summary of the Religious Education in English Schools – Non-Statutory Guidance be noted.

9. Effective SACREs - New Training Materials

The SACRE Advisor demonstrated a resource disk provided by the NASACRE to enable SACRE to support its role, and asked the SACRE how it wished to use the materials.

Resolved – 1) That the SACRE Advisor purchase three additional copies of the disc for each Group to have access to a copy funded from the SACRE budget, if the cost is not too exhaustive.

2) That the SACRE Advisor bring back to the SACRE elements of the disc as appropriate at future meetings to support the work of the SACRE.

10. Update on National Developments in Relation to SACREs

The SACRE Advisor advised the SACRE of the national picture in relation to RE following the new approach likely to be adopted by the new Coalition Government, together with the key findings and recommendations of the Ofsted Report 'Transforming Religious Education'. The SACRE also noted the range of training and events being arranged by the Religious Education Council of England and Wales.

The SACRE agreed that it was the appropriate time to call the Group Director Children to set up an Agreed Syllabus Conference, as required every 5 years. It was hoped that by the first meeting of the Conference there would be additional clarification of the national direction of RE. The SACRE Advisor advised that she was asking teachers for feedback on the Agreed Syllabus via network meetings and it was intended that this intelligence would be available to the Conference. The SACRE emphasised the importance of the Conference being appropriately resourced by the Local Authority.

Resolved: 1) That the report and the new national developments in relation to RE be noted.

2) That the Group Director Children be asked to convene an Agreed Syllabus

Conference to begin the review of the Locally Agreed Syllabus, and asked to note that this is required to be funded separately to the SACRE and is a statutory requirement.

3) That further to 2) it be recommended that the first meeting of the Agreed Syllabus Conference be held on 28th September 2010, following a shortened meeting of SACRE, if the agenda for each meeting will allow this arrangement.

11. Feedback from NASACRE AGM and Other Training Events

The SACRE received a written report from the SACRE Advisor on the NASACRE AGM held on 12th May 2010. The SACRE also noted the Secondary Conference held with Wiltshire schools on 20th June 2010.

Resolved – That SACRE thank the SACRE Advisor for her report.

12. Nomination to Children and Young People's Overview Committee

Mrs Penny Summers advised that she had been asked by the Council's Children and Young People's Overview Committee if she would remain on the Committee to represent the SACRE and asked if the SACRE was willing for her to continue in this role.

Resolved: - That the SACRE confirm their nomination for Mrs Penny Summers to represent the SACRE on the Children and Young People's Overview Committee.

13. Future meetings of SACRE

It was noted that meetings of SACRE would be held during this municipal year on Tuesday 28th September, Tuesday 7th December 2010 and Tuesday 15th March 2011, and all meetings would start at 6 pm.

The Clerk agreed to seek alternative venues for some of the meetings of the SACRE this year, including places of worship.