

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TUESDAY, 17 JULY 2012

PRESENT:-

Group A:
Christian Denominations and
Other Religions or Religious
Denominations

Mr David Burbidge (Baptist Church), Mr Mark Cawte (Methodist), Mrs Sarah Lane Cawte (United Reformed Church), Reverend David Howell (Swindon Evangelical Alliance), Mr M S Khan (Muslim Community) and Mr Dinesh Patel (Hindu Community)

Group B:
Church of England

Miss Janet French and Reverend Norma McKemey

Group C:
Teacher Organisations

Mrs Tracy Mason, Miss Lottie Rowe and Mr Paul Sunners

Group D:
Councillors

Councillors Doreen Dart, Russell Holland, Fay Howard and James Robbins

Also in attendance:

Katy Staples (SACRE Advisor) and Sarah Foulkes (Primary Link Adviser)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Claire Ellis, Ms Steph Munding, Mrs Penny Summers, Reverend Beth Brown and Mr Tony McAteer.

1. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair

Resolved – 1) That Councillor Doreen Dart be appointed as Chair of the SACRE for 2012/13.

2) That Mr Mark Cawte be appointed as Vice-Chair of the SACRE of 2012/13.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded members of the SACRE of the need to make any declarations of interest. Councillor Robbins advised that he was a teacher at Churchfields School, but that this did not amount to a personal or prejudicial interest in respect of any of the items on the agenda.

3. Public Question Time

No public questions were submitted at the meeting.

4. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting on 27th March 2012 be approved.

Matters Arising -

- The SACRE noted the appointment of new local authority representatives on Group D since the last meeting. It was asked that thanks be sent to the former

Councillor Fisher for his service on the SACRE over many years.

- Further to minute 42, Lottie Rowe reported that the interfaith workshop on 23 May had gone well with an excellent facilitation from a Muslim woman who was working for a Jewish Charity. Lottie Rowe agreed to provide contact details for the charity to the next secondary network meeting.

5. Religious Education at Crowdys Hill - Introduction to the school from Tracy Mason

Mrs Tracy Mason welcomed the SACRE to Crowdys Hill school and to her classroom. Mrs Mason advised on the way in which RE was taught in the school, pointed out examples of work, and invited members of the SACRE to participate in some example activities and questions which the pupils would be asked to explore. It was noted that the pupils followed the Agreed Syllabus for Key Stage 2 and 3, but that it was adapted for their specific needs and learning outcomes.

The SACRE thanked Tracy Mason for hosting the meeting and for her presentation.

6. Collective Worship Guidance

The SACRE considered a report of the SACRE Advisor requesting that the SACRE endorse the final Collective Worship and asking for the SACRE to agree how it should be disseminated to schools. The SACRE thanked the working group and SACRE Advisor for their work on the Guidance, and discussed its content.

The SACRE welcomed the training that the SACRE Advisor had already provided to some teachers on the draft guidance and discussed how it should be publicised to schools.

It was suggested that members of the SACRE might make themselves available to be involved in collective worship in schools, and schools should be encouraged to share the guidance with those outside the school who regularly contribute to Collective Worship sessions.

Resolved – 1) That the new Swindon Collective Worship Guidance, attached at Appendix 2 to the Agenda report be endorsed, subject to the SACRE Advisor:

- Double-checking the balance of faith groups represented in the quotes which are included in the document.
- Adding a contents page.
- Writing a digest / summary to be made available online alongside the full guidance on the website.

2) The Guidance be highlighted to schools via Schools Online, the Governors newsletter, Headteachers' briefing meetings, and the RE network meetings.

7. Provision of RE in Schools

The SACRE received a report on representations to be made to Swindon Schools about RE provision as agreed at the last meeting, taking into account the recommendations of the Children's Trust Board.

It was agreed that any letters to schools should make it clear that there were a variety of ways that RE could be taught in schools, but that it was important that

access to RE was maintained in accordance with statutory requirements. It was suggested that in addition to writing to Secondary schools, a survey could be sent to all schools at the beginning of the new term to ask them to provide information to the SACRE on how they teach RE. This would enable the SACRE to fulfil its statutory responsibilities to monitor RE provision.

Katy Staples had set out in the report potential questions for the survey, which the SACRE discussed. It was suggested that the question about time allocated to RE be amended to ask the number of hours RE provided per week for each academic year. Schools could also be asked what syllabus they would use, if a faith-based school or academy, if they are not using the locally agreed syllabus.

It was agreed that any questions with regard to Collective Worship might be better deferred to a future survey until schools have had a chance to use the new guidance.

Resolved – 1) That the SACRE welcomes the endorsement of the Swindon Children's Trust Board to its work and the proposal to write to schools in relation to the provision of Religious Education.

2) That the Chair of SACRE, in conjunction with the Head of Commissioning – Economy / Attainment and SACRE Advisor, write to all Secondary Schools in the Borough to highlight Religious Education results and to support statutory teaching of Religious Education.

3) That the SACRE Advisor invite all schools in the Borough to complete a survey to provide information to the SACRE on how they are providing RE and teaching the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

4) The SACRE give consideration to a survey of the provision of Collective Worship later in the academic year once the new guidance has been in place for 6 months or more.

8. Update to SACRE Development Plan 2011/2013

The SACRE gave consideration to the update to its Development Plan for 2011/13. It was agreed that the Plan could be further updated to reflect new work of the SACRE, such as use of the survey to monitor RE provision.

Resolved – 1) That the Development Plan update for 2011/13 be endorsed.

2) That the SACRE Advisor and School Improvement Advisor give consideration to drafting the next edition of the Development Plan and report back to the SACRE at an appropriate time.

9. Update on Network Meetings and RE Training Sessions

The SACRE received an update on the meetings of the Primary Network and the Secondary Humanities Teaching and Learning Group for RE, which had taken place since the last meeting. The SACRE were pleased to see the increased uptake from schools to these meetings and the mutual support being provided to teachers.

The SACRE welcomed the training that had been undertaken by the SACRE Advisor since the last meeting in relation to the Agreed Syllabus and draft Collective Worship guidance. Katy Staples advised that the South West Conference training would also be offered to Swindon schools. It was highlighted that it was important to open training up to Teaching Assistants who might be involved in teaching RE. Katy Staples confirmed that the Diocese offered an RE for Teaching Assistants course which was well supported.

In response to a question from the SACRE, Sarah Foulkes advised on the Teaching School arrangement run in Swindon by the White Horse Federation. The SACRE also discussed the changing role of the Local Authority in relation to education.

The SACRE reiterated their wish to continue to support the teaching of RE across all schools in Swindon, and it was confirmed by teachers present that this was of great assistance. It was agreed that it would be helpful for the SACRE to re-visit the Effective SACREs Audit tool to assess its own role and performance.

Resolved – 1) That the SACRE note the Report.

2) That the Effective SACRE Audit Tool be brought back to the SACRE at the next suitable meeting to assess its role and performance.

10. National Developments in Religious Education

Katy Staples (SACRE Advisor) presented a detailed report on national developments in relation to Religious Education since the last meeting. This included information on:

- The New Ofsted Framework
- The review of RE syllabus being carried out at the request of the Government by the RE Council.
- The new RE Curriculum for Methodist Schools.
- The introduction of a new RE Quality Mark (REQM) which schools could apply for to recognise good practice in RE.
- Holocaust memorial day arrangements.
- The Day- a new resource for RE based on news analysis.
- Minutes of the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) AGM.
- NASACRE leaflet for Academies on the role of SACREs.
- Notes from the RE South West Conference.
- Information on Trusts which give grants for supporting RE.

Resolved – 1) That the update on national developments be noted.

2) That the new leaflet for Academies from NASACRE be made available to schools via on Schools Online and on the Governor online newsletter.

11. Date and Time of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the SACRE was scheduled for 25th September 2012 at 6 pm.

It was noted that Bishop Lee was delivering a lecture on Science and Religion at St Francis School at 7.30 pm on the same night which many members of the SACRE would want to attend.

It was agreed that SACRE Clerk should approach the school to see if the SACRE could be hosted by St Francis School and the time of the SACRE meeting be moved to 5.30 pm.