

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TUESDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2012

PRESENT:-

Group A: Christian Denominations and Other Religions or Religious Denominations	Mr Mark Cawte (Methodist) (Chair), Mr Arun Bedi (Sikh Community), Mr David Burbidge (Baptist Church), Mr Mark Cawte (Methodist (Chair)), Mrs Sarah Lane Cawte (United Reformed Church) and Mr Tony McAteer (Catholic Community)
Group B: Church of England	Miss Janet French, Reverend Norma McKemey and Mrs Penny Summers
Group C: Teacher Organisations	Mr Paul Sunners, and Mrs Victoria Misselbrook (tbc).
Group D: Councillors	Councillors Claire Ellis, Fay Howard and James Robbins
Also in attendance:	Katy Staples (SACRE Adviser) and Sarah Foulkes (School Improvement Adviser)

Apologies for absence were received from Ms Steph Munding, Reverend Beth Brown, Mrs Tracy Mason, Miss Lottie Rowe, Mrs Mandy Sandleton, Reverend David Howell, Mr M S Khan and Mr Dinesh Patel.

19. Tribute to Councillor Doreen Dart

The SACRE took time at the start of the meeting to remember Councillor Doreen Dart, who had served as the Chair of the SACRE for several years. The Vice-Chair repeated parts of the Civic memorial service held on 19th November 2012. Members of the SACRE paid tribute to her understanding, encouragement, determination, strength of character, sense of humour, authenticity and her commitment to public service. The SACRE then had a few moments of silence in remembrance.

20. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair

Resolved – (1) That Mr Mark Cawte (Group A) be appointed as the Chair of the Standing Advisory Council for the remainder of 2012/13 municipal year.

(2) That Ms Lottie Rowe (Group C) be appointed as be appointed as the Vice-Chair of the Standing Advisory Council for the remainder of 2012/13 municipal year.

21. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting.

Mrs Sarah Lane-Cawte made a personal but non-pecuniary declaration of interest in respect of Agenda Item No. 8 'RE Council Review of Religious Education' as she was on the Board of the RE Council. Mr Mark Cawte indicated that this also gave him a personal interest in the matter. Councillor Robbins advised that he was a teacher at Churchfields School, but that he did not have a personal or pecuniary interest in any particular items on the agenda.

22. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

23. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 25th September 2012, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

24. Membership Update

The SACRE received a Membership Update report and noted that there were currently four vacancies on Group C (Teacher Associations). The SACRE were advised that in accordance with the SACRE Constitution, the Group should contain up to 8 representatives of teaching associations, which in the Council's opinion ought to be represented, with at least 3 being teachers of RE, and at least one a primary school teacher.

Three expressions of interest had been received. One from a RE Co-ordinator at Seven Fields Primary Ms Victoria Misselbrook to represent the NUT, and two secondary teachers, Mel Shepherd of Dorcan and Catherine Lomax at Churchfields to represent NASUWT. The SACRE did not feel able to support both of the representatives from NASUWT as full members as although there was a need for additional Secondary representation, the NASUWT was already represented. It was suggested that the one who had applied first be offered a full membership, and the other teacher the deputy position.

As part of the Membership Update, Mrs Penny Summers advised that she was currently a non-voting co-opted member of the Children and Young People's Overview Committee representing the SACRE, but had fulfilled this role for a while and would like to step down from the position. She asked if anyone else would be interested in the role. Mr Paul Sunners indicated that he would like to be nominated. It was noted that this was a discretionary co-opted role on the Overview Committee, and it would be up to the Committee if it wished to continue to have a representative from the SACRE and if it wished to accept the nomination.

Resolved - 1) The SACRE appointed the following to be members of Group C (Teacher Associations) for a period initially up to September 2015, unless renewed at that time:

- Victoria Misselbrook (Representative for NUT)
- Mel Shepherd (Representative for NASUWT)
- Catherine Lomax (Deputy Representative for NASUWT)

2) That it be recommended to the Children and Young People's Overview Committee that Mr Paul Sunners be appointed as a non-voting co-opted member to represent the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education in place of Mrs

Penny Summers, and that Mrs Summers be thanked for her service to the Committee.

25. RE Council Review of Religious Education

The SACRE received a copy of the Preliminary Report from the RE Council for England and Wales (REC) on the review of the RE curriculum which had been issued for consultation. In addition to the main report, the SACRE noted an addendum which had been issued on matters raised during initial consultation meetings. The SACRE had appointed a Working Group at the last meeting to review the document in detail, and a copy of their recommended response to the consultation was considered.

The SACRE thanked the Working Group for their work on the response, and agreed that it supported the preliminary report as amended by the Addendum, subject to the suggestions of the working group. It was agreed that the response be approved, subject to the addition that the REC be asked to consider how to make the language and terminology used more accessible to non-specialists.

Mrs Sarah Lane Cawte and Mr Mark Cawte had declared a non-prejudicial personal interest in this item as she was a Board member for the REC, but was not employed by them. Sarah Lane-Cawte advised that the REC was not a funded body and that to support their work they were organising sponsored walks and RE Trails at different locations round the country. It was suggested that SACRE Members may be interested in contributing to the creation of a Swindon RE Trail, which could be linked into the Agreed Syllabus. If money was raised from a sponsored walk, then half the money could go to the REC, and half to a fund for RE projects in Swindon. The Clerk advised that the legal position of the SACRE fundraising for the REC would need to be checked. Sarah Lane-Cawte advised that she would be happy to lead on any project to establish the RE Trail, and Paul Sunners, Tony McAteer, Katy Staples and Mark Cawte indicated that they would wish to be involved.

Resolved - 1) That the SACRE Advisor submit the response attached at Report Appendix '2' to the REC as the SACRE's formal submission, subject to the addition that the REC be asked to consider how to make the language and terminology used more accessible to non-specialists.

2) That SACRE Members be invited to make any additional comments they may have direct to the REC.

3) That subject to the legal position on fund raising being checked and reported back to the SACRE, that Sarah Lane-Cawte lead a working group to set up a RE Trail in Swindon, which links to the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

26. SACRE Self-Evaluation and Draft Development Plan 2012-2014

The SACRE reviewed the summary of the self-evaluation exercise it had carried out at the last meeting, and considered the implications of this exercise for the draft Development Plan for the SACRE for 2012/14.

It was noted that some of the actions in the Development Plan had already started, but those beyond April 2013 would depend on the SACRE Budget being maintained

at its current levels. The School Improvement Adviser agreed to check on the budget and report back to the next meeting.

In relation to priority 1A), the SACRE Advisor tabled a summary of the results of a survey of Schools on the teaching of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. It was hoped that the survey data would help the SACRE to identify both needs and compliance, in supporting raising standards of teaching and learning in RE. Katy Staples agreed to summarise the survey results further into primary and secondary responses, in a form which could be used in the SACRE's annual report and as evidence to the Parliamentary Group on RE.

It was noted that a South West SACRE Conference was being held on 14th March 2013, which would include information on the RE Review, which was a key development in the coming year. Given the subject matter, it was agreed that a representative of the SACRE should attend, who could use any information gained to the benefit of Swindon Schools. The SACRE Advisor was also attending, but as a seminar leader.

Resolved - 1) That the outcome of the self-evaluation exercise undertaken at the last meeting be noted.

2) That the results of the survey of Schools on teaching of the Locally Agreed Syllabus are noted, and the SACRE Advisor analyses the results further to make a distinction between primary and secondary responses.

3) That the Development Plan for the SACRE for 2012/14 be approved, subject to confirmation being received at the next meeting of the budget available to the SACRE for 2013/14.

4) That the Chair, Vice-Chair or a Member of Group C be nominated as a representative of the SACRE to attend the South West SACRE Conference on 14th March 2012.

27. National Developments in RE

The SACRE Advisor provided an update the SACRE on National Developments in Religious Education since the last meeting, which included:

- a) A national discussion on the status of Circular 1/94, guidance which requires that collective worship in schools should be primarily Christian based. It was noted that the Circular was still in place, but it was unlikely to be enforced. However, this would have little practical effect for local schools, who should continue to follow the local Collective Worship Guidance issued by the SACRE at the last meeting.
- b) An invitation from the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on RE, for individuals and organisations concerned with RE to make contributions to a major national project on RE. Two oral evidence sessions were being held in the House of Commons as part of the project, the next one was on 16th January 2013. It was noted that the SACRE Chair had written to the local MPs in September on their involvement in the APPG, and Robert Buckland MP had confirmed that he was a member.

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

28. Update on Network Meetings

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.

It was noted that Swindon teachers were being offered the opportunity to attend a conference for RE teachers in conjunction with by Bristol City and South Gloucestershire, organised by Bristol Diocese. This will be a good opportunity for our teachers to attend training that Swindon could not host on its own, and this was welcomed by the SACRE.

Resolved - 1) That the SACRE note the Report.

29. Date and Time of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the SACRE was scheduled to take place on 19th March 2013. Victoria Misselbrook offered to host the meeting at Seven Fields Primary School.