

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TUESDAY, 19 MARCH 2013

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), Mrs Sarah Lane Cawte (United
Reformed Church), Reverend David Howell
(Swindon Evangelical Alliance), Mr M S Khan
(Muslim Community), Mr Tony McAteer (Catholic
Community) and Mr Dinesh Patel (Hindu
Community)

Group B:
Church of England

Miss Janet French, Reverend Norma McKemey,
Ms Steph Mundin and Mrs Penny Summers

Group C:
Teacher Organisations

Mrs Tracy Mason, Miss Lottie Rowe and Mr Paul
Sunners.

Group D:
Councillors

Councillors Claire Ellis, Fay Howard and
James Robbins

Also in attendance:

Katy Staples (SACRE Advisor) and Paddy Bradley
(Head of Commissioning – Economy and
Attainment).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Russell Holland, Reverend Beth Brown, Mrs Mandy Sandleton, Ms Mel Shepherd, Ms Catherine Lomax and Sarah Foulkes (School Improvement Advisor).

30. Declarations of Interest

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

Cllr Robbins advised that he was a member of staff at Churchfields School.

31. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

32. Minutes

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2012 be confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to the amendment that Councillor Robbins was a member of staff at Churchfields School, but not a teacher as recorded.

Further to Minute 20, the Chair welcomed Lottie Rowe to her first meeting as the new Vice-Chair of the SACRE.

Further to Minute 24(1), it was noted that the NASUWT had approved the appointment of Mel Shepherd and Catherine Lomax (Deputy) to the SACRE. Unfortunately, Victoria Misselbrook had had to tender her resignation due to personal circumstances.

Further to Minute 24(2), Paul Sunners advised that he had been appointed as the non-voting co-opted member on the Children and Young People's Overview Committee to represent the SACRE. He explained that this had gone to a vote in his absence due to his referral to the General Teaching Council. It was noted that the Overview Committee had asked that their thanks be passed to Penny Summers for her service on the Committee.

Further to Minute 25(3), a briefing note had been circulated to SACRE members, confirming that the SACRE could not be directly involved in fundraising for the RE Council for England and Wales, and therefore could not arrange a sponsored walk. However, the SACRE could assist with the development of RE Trails to be used in support of the syllabus, which could be used for the walk. The Chair advised that those who in an individual capacity wished to assist with the sponsored walk should meet informally after this meeting.

33. RE at Seven Fields Primary School

This item had been cancelled as Sevenfields School had been unable to host the meeting.

34. SACRE Annual Report and Development Plan 2012-14

The SACRE received its draft Annual Report covering the period September 2011 to August 2012. It was agreed that the Chair would add his introduction following the meeting. This set out the work of the SACRE for the year, including the development of new guidance for Collective Worship and the activity to support RE in schools. In addition to the examination results for August 2012, the report included a summary of the results of a survey undertaken by the SACRE with schools on the delivery of the Agreed Syllabus. A further analysis of the results of the survey by phase was attached at Appendix 2, as requested at the last meeting. It was noted that this gave an indication on the teaching of RE in Swindon Schools, but should be approached cautiously when drawing conclusions, due to the small sample. For example only 4 out of the 16 schools who had responded, were primary schools.

Paddy Bradley (Head of Commissioning – Economy and Attainment) presented the examination results for Religious Education for 2012 as set out in the Annual Report. He advised that there had been an increase in the number of students entered into public examination and all but one school had entered pupils for GCSE RE. There was a slight decrease in the number of pupils achieving A to C at GCSE, but the level was above the national average. However, there was anecdotal evidence through the surveys and local networks that schools were increasingly teaching RE in Year 10 and not Year 11. It was anticipated that many schools would move away from providing RE short-course and this would represent a decrease in access to RE. The SACRE noted that there had been a large increase in the number of pupils taken AS Level (from 19 to 57) and an increase in proportion

of A-C grades. There had been a slight decrease in the number of pupils taking A levels, but the proportion of A-C grades achieved had increased. The numbers of pupils were small, and therefore it was difficult to compare across years, but overall the level of performance of pupils had generally been maintained over the last few years. The SACRE were concerned that at least one school had not entered any pupils for RE examinations, and what this meant in terms of access to RE for pupils in the school.

It was recognised that Ofsted were no longer monitoring RE provision.

The SACRE discussed the impact of schools becoming academies.

In Swindon there was good collaboration between secondary academies and sharing of good practice through the subject based secondary learning and teaching group. Lottie Rowe advised that it made a significant difference to the group when Katy Staples (SACRE Advisor) was able to attend, and it was agreed it was important to continue to fund her time for this purpose from the SACRE budget. In future years, it was suggested that it may be appropriate to seek a contribution from the academies for this support.

It was understood that Academies were expected to teach a locally agreed syllabus as there was not a national curriculum. Paddy Bradley (Head of Commissioning, Economy and Attainment) agreed to check on whether use of the locally agreed syllabus was specifically included in the funding agreements for Swindon schools.

The SACRE received an update on its Development Plan, which had been discussed at the last meeting. The SACRE noted that £5,000 had been approved for its work in the next year and agreed a number of amendments to the programme. Katy Staples advised of the training which had been available to schools this year, in particular on a self-purchase basis.

Mark Cawte suggested that he write to the Headteachers of academy schools to advise them of the continued support available from the SACRE. Katy Staples suggested as part of the network meeting work at target 1b), that she begin to work with schools to identify local leaders of learning, which was a successful pilot activity in Bristol. For the work on establishing a list of local faith groups (item 3b), David Howell advised that he would contact Youth for Christ who held a comprehensive list of Christian contacts in the area, which could be added to any baseline list available from the Interfaith network of all faith groups and contacts.

Resolved – 1) That the draft SACRE Annual Report attached as Appendix 1 to the Report be approved, subject to the typographical amendments advised at the meeting, and the SACRE Advisor be authorised to finalise the report including the Chair's introduction, and to submit it to the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE).

2) That the summary of Swindon Examination Results for 2012 be noted, and SACRE continue to support all schools in Swindon in relation to the provision of Religious Education to all pupils.

3) That the analysis of SACRE Survey Results requested at the last meeting be noted.

4) That the SACRE endorse its Development Plan 2012-2014 as attached at

Appendix '2' and continue to implement it, subject to the amendments as follows:

- 1b) be amended to 'Promoting High Standards of Teaching and Learning in RE'.
- The target date for 3b) relating to the development of a directory of local people and places of faith be amended to September 2013, and Mark Cawte be included in list of those responsible on this action and that for 4b).
- Where possible the indicative costs of actions be reduced or moved to future years, in order for the plan to be achieved within the SACRE's £5,000 budget.

35. National Developments in RE

Katy Staples (SACRE Advisor) advised the SACRE of the significant national developments in RE since the last meeting as follows:

- a) It was noted that although RE did not count as one of the subjects which could be included in the English Baccalaureate, it was one of 8 subjects which would count for assessing progress made between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. The Chair welcomed the clarity that this decision brought to schools on the status of RE, but noted that this was reliant on proper assessment of attainment in RE.
- b) It was noted that national bursaries for Teachers of RE had been withdrawn, although some small amounts were still available from Culham St Gabriel's charity. There was concern that this would lead to a reduction in the number of subject specialist RE teachers.
- c) The Government had issued the consultation framework for a new national curriculum for England and invited comments by 16th April 2013. This includes in its introduction a re-stating of the duty for there to be a daily act of collective worship in schools, and the requirement to teach RE at every key stage.
- d) The SACRE noted that Phase 2 of the RE Council's RE curriculum review was underway. Although RE was not included in the national curriculum, the RE Council's review was taking into account the way in which other subjects will be assessed, so that assessment of RE can be in line with subjects such as Geography.
- e) The report of the All Parliamentary Party Group for RE had been published, and the SACRE Advisor circulated a summary. It was agreed that the Clerk to the SACRE would circulate the link to the full report to all members after the meeting. This was a comprehensive overview of the supply and support of RE. It was noted that Robert Buckland MP was a member of the Group. Sarah Lane-Cawte advised that Justin Tomlinson MP had agreed to be formally presented with a copy of the report at Haydonleigh Primary School in

a few weeks' time, and to be committed to looking at the issues it raises.

- f) The RE Quality Mark had now been achieved by 40 schools. This was open to all schools and it was agreed that this should be promoted via schools online. If a school did not want to apply for the quality mark, but was interested in self-evaluation, the criteria could be downloaded as an improvement tool from the Religious Education Quality Mark website (www.reqm.org).
- g) It was noted that RE was now included in the list of subjects for which a Specialist Leaders of Education (SLE) role was available and this was welcomed.
- h) It was noted that the Tri-annual RE Report was due out from Ofsted in the next few months. In addition, the report on GCSE RE was also due out soon.
- i) Katy Staples had attached as an Annex for information a perspective from John Keast, Chair of the RE Council on the current national approach to RE.
- j) The SACRE noted the NASACRE newsletter for Spring 2013, and the advertisement of the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) AGM ON 23rd May 2013. The SACRE did not usually send a representative, but as the Chair was keen to attend, it was agreed that this be supported, subject to the necessary budget being available.
- k) Katy Staples confirmed that she had attended the Dillington House South West SACRE conference on 14th March, and Victoria Misselbrook of Sevenfields School had also attended. It was agreed that information on the Conference be reported to the next meeting.

Resolved -

- 1. That the update on national developments be noted.
- 2. That the SACRE Clerk and Advisor make information on the RE Quality Mark available to schools via Schools Online.
- 3. That the Clerk to the SACRE send to all Members of the SACRE a link to the full report from the All Parliamentary Party Group for RE.
- 4. That the Chair of the SACRE be authorised to attend the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) AGM on 23rd May, subject to the appropriate budget being available.
- 5. That the SACRE receive information on the Dillington House South West SACRE conference at its next meeting.

The SACRE received an update from the Secondary Humanities Teaching and Learning Group for RE, which had taken place on 16th January 2013. The Primary Network had had to be deferred due to ill health, and was now due to take place on 22nd March 2013.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

37. Dates for Future Meetings

The SACRE was asked if it wished to hold its meetings on Tuesdays or Thursdays evenings in 2013/14. It was agreed that the current day and time of meeting should continue. The following indicative dates for SACRE meetings were noted:

Tuesday 25th June 2013 at 6 pm.

Tuesday 1st October 2013 at 6 pm.

Tuesday 3rd December 2014 at 6 pm.

Tuesday 18th March 2014 at 6 pm.