

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Minutes of the meeting held at 6.30 pm on 16 February 2011

Present:

Councillor Mrs Anne Manning, Vice-Chairman (in the Chair)
Councillor Roger Charsley (until 7pm)
Councillor MacMull, Reverend Camp,
Mrs Hawkes, Ms Honey, Mr Hagley,
Mr Mahmood, Mrs Polydorou, Mr Riat,
Ms Tranchina, Ms Thompson,
Mr C Town and Reverend S Varney

Also Present:

Ms Penny Smith-Orr, RE Adviser
Arlene Fane, Teacher, Observing the meeting
Christine Reeks, Clerk to SACRE

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF ALTERNATE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Martin Sweet (Chairman), and Councillor Mrs Manning Chaired the meeting on his behalf. Apologies were also received from Councillor McBride, Mrs Michaelis, Mr Stone and Dr George Searle. Councillor Charsley left the meeting at 7pm to attend another meeting. The Chairman welcomed Arlene Fane, Teacher from St George's CE School, who was attending the meeting as an observer. She is also a Churchwarden at St Mary's Church, Bromley.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3 A) MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20TH OCTOBER 2010

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 20th October 2010 be confirmed.

B) MATTERS ARISING:

There was no discussion on matters arising.

4 ORAL UPDATE AND PUBLICATIONS

(The item on Youth SACRE was considered first)

a) SACRE Annual Event

The SACRE annual event was held at the Education Development Centre on 24th November 2010. The event which looked at Philosophy for children was led by Jed Stone (a teacher at Bullers Wood School and a Member of SACRE). The RE Adviser informed SACRE Members that the event had been successful and had given a good insight into the subject. Mr. Mahmood commented that whilst he considered the event had been excellent he had found the environment noisy and distracting when group discussion had taken place. He suggested that in future perhaps screens could be used to help alleviate this. The RE Adviser said that this suggestion would be borne in mind for future events. The Chairman commented that she had found the event interesting and it had encouraged lateral thinking. She remarked in particular on the contribution made by the children from Pickhurst School who were very confident, and asked that Jed Stone be thanked on behalf of SACRE for leading the event.

b) Islamic Competition

The Islamic Competition had taken place at Darul Uloom on 4th November 2010. Mr Mahmood said that the quality of projects had been very good, and as usual the event had been most enjoyable and appreciated by all. Fiona Hawkes who attended the event commented that it had been good for the children to receive feedback on their projects. The RE Adviser said that it had been a very interesting evening and the hospitality at the event had been excellent. Details of the next Islamic Competition on 24th November 2011 were circulated to SACRE Members.

c) SACRE Annual Report 2009/10

It was reported that this had been sent to the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency and had also been circulated to schools. The Chairman was surprised to note that St Olaves School did not enter pupils for the full GCSE Course in Religious Studies and only entered them for the short course. Jan Thompson, Diocesan Adviser commented that the short course was undertaken by St Olaves pupils whilst they were in years 9 and 10.

The Chairman thanked the RE Adviser for her hard work in producing the annual report.

d) Youth SACRE

The Chairman welcomed two members of Bromley Youth SACRE to the meeting. The young men who attended Coopers Technology College showed a film which they had helped to produce following a visit to the synagogue in

Highland Road, Bromley. The film showed a “virtual tour” of the synagogue and included an interview with Rabbi Tony Hammond. The film had been produced by the Coopers Humanities Department working with Bromley Youth SACRE. The RE Adviser informed the meeting that the purpose of the film was for it to be used as a learning resource by schools, and it would be put on the Managed Learning Environment ‘Fronter’. She thanked the boys for their work in helping to produce the film and also extended thanks to Fiona Hawkes (a teacher at Coopers Technology College and a Member of SACRE), for the huge support she had given to the Youth SACRE.

The Chairman thanked the members of Youth SACRE for attending the meeting. Members of SACRE found the film very interesting and agreed that it would be a useful learning resource for other pupils. They noted that a similar exercise would be carried out at Bromley Parish Church.

e) Holocaust Memorial Day

This event had been organised by Mandy King (Pupil Support Service) and had taken place at Ravensbourne School. Two holocaust survivors had spoken at the event and the local synagogue had also been involved. The event had been well attended by pupils from both primary and secondary schools. Emma Honey suggested that schools could be encouraged to undertake a holocaust memorial lesson themselves and there was a short free video available which they could use. The RE Adviser said that Primary schools had been encouraged to mark the 27th January in their collective worship and some RE co-ordinators had done this. Reverend Varney commented on the importance of such events but was unaware that it had taken place. The Chairman asked the RE Adviser to contact Mandy King to find out the date for the Holocaust event in 2012 and notify SACRE Members of this at their meeting in the Autumn Term.

f) RE in Secondary Schools

The RE Adviser informed Members that a response had been received from the Department for Education relating to the introduction of the English Baccalaureate. The DFE had stated that RE is not included as fulfilling the humanity requirement of the English Baccalaureate, because it is already a compulsory subject. One of the intentions of the English Baccalaureate is to encourage wider take up of geography and history in addition to, rather than instead of, compulsory RE.

A letter received by Cornwall SACRE from Michael Gove, Education Minister, made it clear that Religious Education is still a statutory subject to be taught from a locally agreed syllabus in all schools to all registered pupils and, as such is not part of the National Curriculum review. The RE Adviser also referred to a recent statement of the government’s position as recorded in the Parliamentary record, Hansard.

The RE Adviser commented that there appeared to be some confusion nationally, as some schools did not appear to be clear about the statutory

requirement for RE to be taught in schools and were no longer teaching RE. Emma Honey suggested that it would be helpful for secondary schools to be reminded that the teaching of RE is a statutory requirement.

General discussion on the subject took place and the Diocesan Adviser suggested that Bromley SACRE write to the Government to ask what they are doing to enforce the law on teaching RE in schools. She suggested that the RE Adviser draft a letter to the Minister of Education for the Chairman to sign on behalf of Bromley SACRE.

The Chairman suggested that it would be helpful to know how academies and free schools will work with SACRE, and she would contact George Searle to seek clarification.

g) Science and Religion Seminar

On 3rd February 2011, The Company of Educators held a seminar on Science and Religion and it was understood that Mr Gupta had planned to attend. As Mr Gupta was unable to attend the SACRE meeting and give some feedback on the seminar, the Chairman requested that he be asked to provide comments for the next SACRE meeting.

5 DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2011 AND BUDGET

Report No. DCYP11027

Members considered the draft development plan which had been drawn up with due consideration to the statutory duties of SACRE which are to:

- require the LA to review the locally agreed syllabus at least every five years;
- produce an annual report, to be distributed to schools and interested parties, to NASACRE and as directed by education department;
- advise on matters relating to teaching methods, the choice of teaching material and the provision of training for teachers in RE and collective worship.

A few minor typographical errors were pointed out in the development plan and details were passed to the SACRE clerk for amendment.

Members noted the following comments on the SACRE budget which had been submitted by Dr George Searle:

In the light of the rapidly worsening financial position of Councils and the proposed changes to National Curriculum, examinations and requirements on SACRE within the Education Bill 2011 introduced to Parliament, the following proposals for the SACRE budget have been made:

- (i) For the financial year 2011/12 leave unchanged at 2010/11 level the budget for support of the SACRE.*
- (ii) Undertake a review of support to the SACRE (with the aim of reducing or containing future funding for support) during Summer/Autumn 2011.*
- (iii) New budget proposals for forthcoming year(s) (2012/13 – 2015/16) to be presented at the SACRE meeting in February 2012.*

Members were unaware of proposed changes in the Education Bill relating to the requirements on SACREs and asked for further clarification. The RE Adviser and Diocesan Adviser commented that there were no proposed changes to the requirements on SACRE in the Education Bill. SACRE Members wished to know who would be involved with the proposed review of funding for support to SACRE, and if SACRE would be involved with the review. The Chairman agreed to contact George Searle to seek further clarification on these matters.

Jan Thompson, Diocesan Adviser, informed the meeting that it had been necessary for the Religious Education Centre located at Bishop Justus School to vacate the premises, as the school had reached capacity and run out of space. The RE Centre had been established ten years ago to support RE and collective worship. Originally a joint Bromley/Diocesan project it moved out of the Education Development Centre after six years to be accommodated at Bishop Justus School. Throughout all this time it had been opened on Wednesdays to offer advice, resources and in-service training. The Diocesan Adviser was there most Wednesdays but it also relied heavily on voluntary help. Consultation had taken place with the local authority and with SACRE through its Chair and RE Adviser, but alternative suitable premises were unable to be found. In the circumstances the RE resources had been distributed as follows:

- The RE Resource Boxes had been shared between the EDC and Bennett Memorial Diocesan School in Tunbridge Wells
- Collective Worship Books had been taken by Spinnaker trust on behalf of Bromley SACRE, to support assemblies in Bromley community schools
- RE Books - Primary books had been taken to Bennett Memorial Diocesan School in Tunbridge Wells. Secondary books had been retained at Bishop Justus School
- Early Years Resources had been taken to St George's CE Primary School in Wrotham
- Bromley SACRE materials were being looked after by the RE Adviser.

SACRE Members were disappointed to note that alternative premises for the RE Centre had not been found. The Diocesan Adviser further commented that the RE Centre was originally a joint Bromley/Diocesan project with the Diocese providing the manpower and LB Bromley providing the accommodation. When the RE Centre moved to Bishop Justus School the Local Authority made an agreement with the Diocese to pay for services and office support, as the LA had benefited by gaining use of the room at the EDC. However, the Diocesan Adviser understood that the payments had not been made and the Local Authority had now said that there were no funds available. Members expressed concern about the loss of the RE Centre and requested that the Chairman contact George Searle to ask about the future of an RE Centre for the Borough, and to clarify the position regarding the Local Authority agreement with the Diocese.

RESOLVED that

- (i) Members note the achievements of the development plan for 2010;**
- (ii) Members adopt the draft development plan for 2011;**
- (iii) The Chairman to seek further clarification as detailed above, regarding the Education Bill 2011, the proposed review of SACRE support and the agreement between the Local Authority and the Diocese relating to the RE Centre.**

6 SACRE MEMBERS' TRAINING

Report No. DCYP11028

In view of time constraints it was agreed that the SACRE training session should be deferred until the next meeting. At that meeting the results of the first training session (held at the SACRE meeting on 20th October 2010) would be discussed. This training activity had considered, "What should a good SACRE be doing?" and it would be useful to link this to the SACRE self-evaluation due to be considered in the Summer term.

RESOLVED that the training session be deferred until the next SACRE meeting.

7 CELEBRATING RE MONTH

Report No. DCYP11029

In order to celebrate the importance of religious education in schools there would be a national month of celebration in March 2011. It was noted that the following events were scheduled to take place:

9th March 2011 at 1pm - Bishop Justus School

An event would be held on the theme of Easter. Further details would be circulated to SACRE Members when available.

10th March 2011 at 5.30pm – Bromley SACRE Members had been invited to attend an additional special meeting of Greenwich SACRE to be held at The Heritage Centre, Woolwich Arsenal, where an exhibition on “The Jewish Way of Life” was taking place. Details of the event were circulated at the meeting.

25th March 2011– Royston Primary School, Penge

An event would be held after school to celebrate the end of their RE week.

31st March 2011 at 10am – NASACRE Conference (Free)

The conference, entitled “Whose RE is it anyway?” would be held at Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham. The Diocesan Adviser commented that many good speakers on RE would be attending. Details of the event had previously been circulated to SACRE members.

1st April 2011 at 1.30pm – St George’s CE Primary School, Bickley

An event would be held to celebrate the end of their RE week.

Bromley SACRE had not planned to lead any activity during Celebrating RE month but the RE Adviser suggested that members visit the Celebrating RE website (www.celebratingre.org) to look at the events taking place all over the country. The Chairman encouraged Members to attend an event if possible.

RESOLVED that the RE Adviser email SACRE Members details of local events taking place during Celebrating Religious Education Month.

8 SACRE FAITH DIRECTORY FOR SCHOOLS

Report no. DCYP11030

The RE Adviser reported that the work on the faith directory for schools was still continuing, and considered that volunteers from faith groups who had offered to talk in schools should meet for a short ‘training’ event. This would outline the legal requirements for RE teaching and strategies for use in the classroom. It was proposed that the training session should last for approximately an hour and a half and take place one evening. The RE Adviser would contact the SACRE clerk to see if a room was available at the Civic centre and would contact people who had previously put their names forward, as soon as a date had been arranged.

SACRE Members were asked to let the RE Adviser know of any suitable people in their faith groups who would be interested in volunteering to speak in schools. Councillor MacMull thought that Russell Chadwick the Town Centre Chaplain might be interested and suggested that he be contacted. As soon as the training had taken place, a list of speakers would be put on the SACRE page on the Managed Learning Environment for Bromley Schools. The list of speakers would also be held by the RE Adviser for those schools who had not bought in to the MLE. Fiona Hawkes commented that those people volunteering to speak in schools should provide details of their date of birth so that they could be checked against "List 99". The RE Adviser said she would ensure that this was done.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) SACRE Members let the RE Adviser know of anyone interested in joining the SACRE Faith Directory;**
- (ii) The RE Adviser make arrangements for the necessary training to take place.**

9 SCHOOL VISITS

Report no. DCYP11031

The RE Adviser reported on a successful visit to Kemnal Technology College during the Autumn Term 2010. SACRE had been invited by Ms Emma Honey, Head of the RE Department and the visit was made by the RE Adviser and Jan Thompson, Diocesan Adviser. The RE Adviser commented on the excellent and enjoyable visit which had taken place.

Members of Bromley SACRE had historically visited two schools per term in order to enable members to experience RE and collective worship in schools. Increasingly these visits had been undertaken by the RE Adviser alone or with one other Member. A discussion took place on the value of SACRE visits to schools and whether these should continue. It was agreed that these visits were of value to both SACRE and the schools, and that they should continue. However, it was difficult for some SACRE Members to attend visits due to their work commitments. Visits usually took place on a Wednesday but this was a difficult day for some Members. It was suggested that visits could also be arranged to take place on Tuesdays. The RE Adviser agreed to try and arrange two visits for the Summer Term. She would notify SACRE Members of the dates as far in advance as possible to see if they would be able to accompany her on the visits.

RESOLVED that the reports of the school visit be noted, and arrangements be made for visits to take place during the Summer Term.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 25th May 2011
Wednesday 19th October 2011
Wednesday 1st February 2012
Wednesday 30th May 2012

All meetings to start at 6.30pm

The Meeting ended at 8.35 pm

Chairman