

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Minutes of the meeting held at 6.30 pm on 1 February 2012

Present:

Martin Sweet (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Anne Manning (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Reg Adams, Councillor Roger Charsley,
Councillor Gordon Norrie,
Virginia Corbyn, Christopher Town, Rev Steve Varney,
Arlene Fane, Fiona Hawkes, Emma Honey, Jed Stone,
Samantha Barnett, Patricia Colling, Swarm Riat, and
Sue Polydorou

Also Present:

Ms Penny Smith-Orr, RE Adviser
Christine Reeks, Clerk to SACRE

22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF ALTERNATE MEMBERS

The Chairman welcomed Virginia Corbyn and Samantha Barnett as new members of SACRE. Ms Corbyn had replaced Jan Thompson as the Church of England representative and Ms Barnett had been appointed as the new Jewish representative following the sad death of Rae Michalis the previous year. Canon Reverend Michael Camp had resigned from SACRE due to his appointment as Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury and he sent his best wishes to SACRE for its continued work.

Mrs Colling left the meeting early due to another commitment.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Gupta, Mr Hagley, Mr Mahmood, Mrs Tranchina and Beverley Johnston, Head of Education Commissioning and Business Services.

23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

24 A) MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19TH OCTOBER 2011

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 19th October 2011 be confirmed

B) MATTERS ARISING:

Minute 15B

The Chairman reported that unfortunately Bob Stewart, MP for Beckenham Constituency was unable to attend the meeting. It was hoped that he might be able to attend on a future occasion.

The RE Adviser clarified the position regarding academies and confirmed that by law they still have to provide religious education at both primary and secondary level (from four to eighteen years). Although academies have to follow a syllabus it does not have to be one which is agreed locally. Ms Corbyn suggested that it might be a good idea for academies to be reminded of this statutory requirement and that the locally agreed syllabus was available for them to use if they so wished.

25 ORAL UPDATE & PUBLICATIONS

a) Islamic Competition

This very successful event had taken place at Darul Uloom on 24th November 2011. The Islamic Competition was much appreciated and valued and the Chairman would write to Mr Mahmood on behalf of SACRE to express thanks to him for organising the event.

(Action MS)

Details of the next Islamic Competition on 15th November 2012 which had been circulated to schools were circulated to SACRE Members. Ms Honey from Kemnal Technology College said that she had not received this information. The RE Adviser agreed to contact Mr Mahmood to ensure that he had the up to date contact details for the schools and academies.

(Action PSO)

b) National Picture of RE

The RE Adviser commented that a synopsis had now been received from the Wokefield Park weekend conference she had attended in October 2011 with teachers and others involved in RE (see minute 16a of the previous SACRE meeting). It had been suggested that the RE Council who represent the collective interests of a wide variety of professional associations and faith communities should be the “national voice of RE”. John Keast the Chairman of the RE Council had chaired the event and outlined not only the problems relating to RE but also looked at the positive aspects. The legal requirement to teach RE in schools was affirmed and the importance of faith communities was emphasised.

The RE Adviser commented that as from the beginning of the current term equalities and human rights would be at the heart of the Ofsted inspection framework. and they would now be inspecting Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education (SMSC) expecting to see that this underpins the whole school ethos, (see Appendix 1). Ms Honey suggested that if a letter was to be sent to schools and academies reminding them of the statutory requirement to provide RE the information from Ofsted could be incorporated.

c) SACRE Annual Report for 2010-2011

It was reported that this had been sent to NASACRE and had also been circulated to schools, libraries, the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People and to SACRE Members. Mrs Colling said that she had not received a copy and the SACRE clerk agreed to forward another copy to her.

(Action CR)

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

d) Youth SACRE

The first meeting of the new Youth SACRE took place on 18th November 2011 at Coopers Technology College when pupils from Bullers Wood School also attended. At the meeting the pupils discussed what they enjoyed about RE and also spoke about the forthcoming Islamic Competition. The RE Adviser commented that the pupils who attended the Youth SACRE were very enthusiastic. The members of the youth SACRE who attended the Islamic Competition had taken photographs of the event and planned to interview and film the winners of the competition. The Youth SACRE then hoped to make a film of the photographs and interviews.

Jed Stone reported that the Youth SACRE were going to make a presentation at the inter secondary school "Neighbourhood In-Service Training" event on 24th February 2012 at Bullers Wood School. The RE Adviser would also be talking at the event about SACRE and how it promotes religious literacy.

The Chairman asked if it would be possible for a small group of the Youth SACRE to attend the SACRE meeting on 30th May 2012. Mr Stone said that he would ask, but this might not be possible due to difficulties in arranging for pupils to attend out of school activities.

The Chairman thanked Fiona Hawkes, Jed Stone and the RE Adviser for their work in connection with the Youth SACRE.

26 SACRE MEMBERS' TRAINING
Report No. DCYP12015

As part of the training for SACRE members, the three SACRE secondary school teachers spoke about RE teaching in their schools.

Fiona Hawkes from Coopers Technology College gave details of the units which were studied by Year 7 pupils. These included an introduction to world religions, 'one church – many branches', Easter, and Sikhism. She commented in particular on teaching about the Five Ks, to increase pupils understanding of Sikhism. Pupils also took part in the annual Islamic Competition. Year 8 pupils focussed on 'Religion and Science' and also studied animal rights. Judaism was also studied and was linked closely with history and teaching about the holocaust.

Mr Riat commented that there appeared to be some confusion when teaching Sikhism particularly in primary schools. He emphasised that not all Sikh men wore the Five Ks (the five signs of their faith) and only those who were committed Sikhs did so. Sikhs laid great emphasis on equality and service to others regardless of status, and Mr Riat outlined the history of Sikhism and the teaching of the human Gurus. Mrs Hawkes confirmed that the teaching of Sikhism at Coopers Technology College reflected this. Mr Riat further commented that pupils were always welcome to visit the Gurdwara at Gravesend.

Mrs Hawkes remarked that the time allocated to the teaching of RE at Coopers Technology College had decreased over the past six years and Religious Studies GCSE was not currently an option. (This had in part been due to the introduction of the English Baccalaureate.) In the previous academic year the short RE course had been taught to the whole of years 9 and 10.

Jed Stone from Bullers Wood said that RS was taught to all pupils in years 9, 10 and 11 at the school. Year 9 had two 50 minute lessons per week whilst years 10 and 11 both had one 50 minute lesson each week. The majority of pupils took the AQA short course whilst those who were more academically able took the full GCSE course.

Emma Honey remarked that in relation to current year 9 pupils the Department for Education had said all exams would be taken at the end of year 11. Some discussion followed, as Mr Stone did not believe that this was the case, according to information he had received. The Chairman expressed concern at the lack of clarity being given to schools regarding the future of RE. Reverend Varney did not feel the lack of clarity was acceptable. He went on to express appreciation and sympathy for the teaching staff in dealing with the unrest and uncertainty of the Government's curriculum review.

The Chairman commented that the uncertainty could affect the welfare and development of children in the Borough and asked there was anything SACRE could do to help. Virginia Corbyn suggested that further clarification be sought from the Department of Education and Councillor Manning suggested that perhaps Bob Stewart MP could ask a question in Parliament about this. Councillor Adams commented that as he understood it, the uncertainty extended to all academic subjects. He considered it important to get MPs "on board".

(Mrs Colling had to leave the meeting at this point.)

Emma Honey from Kemnal Technology College then commented on the teaching of RE. In the past examination results at the college had been poor. RE students had previously sat AQA examinations but now sat examinations of the Welsh Board. Every student undertook the full RE course and was expected to do this to the best of their ability. The examination results had improved dramatically (RE was taught for one hour each week). A Level RS had been introduced and there were currently five students in the group. Ms Honey commented that she was due to take 40 RE students on a trip to Amsterdam the following week.

In bringing this agenda item to a close the Chairman thanked the teacher representatives and commented that it was good to hear that RE was thriving in their schools.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the teachers' presentations be noted;**
- (ii) that the Chairman seeks further clarification from the Department of Education and contacts Bob Stewart MP regarding a question in Parliament.**

27 TAKING RE FORWARD IN BROMLEY Report No. DCYP12016

The Chairman and RE Adviser had met with Beverley Johnston, Head of Education Commissioning and Business Services to discuss the development plan for Bromley SACRE for the next 15 months. A draft development plan had been prepared and was circulated at the meeting for discussion, (see Appendix 2). It was noted that the priority of a SACRE is to monitor RE and collective worship in schools and support schools in the provision of excellent RE.

Over the previous year SACRE had discussed the need for a review of the Bromley Agreed Syllabus, which was launched five years ago, and a review of the 2004 handbook used in primary schools (scheme of work). This needed to be decided upon, as the law dictated that a review must take place every

five years. Some of the more recently appointed SACRE members* did not have a copy of the Agreed Syllabus and the RE Adviser agreed to email a link to them. (*Councillor Adams, Councillor Norrie, Samantha Barnett and Sue Polydorou) (**Action PSO**)

It was reported that the budget for SACRE for the financial year 2012/13 would remain the same as that for 2011/12, with the number of days allocated for the RE Adviser remaining at 35 days per annum. Therefore in order to carry out a review of the syllabus some aspects of the development plan might have to be given a lesser priority.

Reverend Varney expressed the view that it was important not to drop SACRE objectives and suggested that perhaps some of the work currently carried out by the RE Adviser, such as school visits could be delegated to SACRE members. The RE Adviser stated that delegation was something she had considered. However, with regard to school visits she felt that these were also a useful opportunity for her to discuss issues with teachers. Reverend Varney suggested that perhaps one of the SACRE members attending a visit could write up the report. He also questioned whether the SACRE Annual Report needed to be produced and was advised that this was a statutory requirement. Reverend Varney said that perhaps this was something which could also be delegated. The Chairman concurred with the view that delegation was a good idea.

Virginia Corbyn commented that the law stated only the Agreed Syllabus had to be reviewed and it was not essential that the scheme of work had to be updated at this time. The RE Adviser suggested that it is the 2004 scheme of work that needs updating to include new cross curricular activities as much as the Agreed Syllabus. Emma Honey remarked that one of the strengths about the Bromley Agreed Syllabus was that it was supported by guidance from the scheme of work.

The RE Adviser confirmed that the review would not start with a blank sheet of paper and the current Agreed Syllabus would be used as a basis. She advised that the review would involve contacting schools to ask the RE co-ordinators what they liked and disliked about the current syllabus. A working party to include teachers would need to be set up. The RE Adviser remarked that she was currently working with Croydon SACRE to produce a new syllabus. Councillor Adams asked if there was any scope in working with Croydon to produce the Bromley syllabus. The Chairman commented that there was in fact a big difference in the cultural make up of the two boroughs. Fiona Hawkes suggested that perhaps Bexley SACRE would be a more appropriate match. The RE Adviser said that she had looked at their syllabus and it appeared to be quite good.

Reverend Varney asked over what period of time the review would take place. He was informed that this would probably cover four terms. The new Agreed Syllabus would need to be ready before the end of the summer term 2013 for implementation in September 2013.

The Chairman suggested that he and the RE Adviser should meet to discuss the process of the forthcoming review and to determine how many days it would take to complete and inform Beverley Johnson of this and the estimated costs of production by the end of the Spring term. They would report back to SACRE at their next meeting with details of the number of days the RE Adviser would need to allocate to this. Further discussion could then take place on prioritising the other objectives of SACRE and how these could be met.

RESOLVED that

(i) the Chairman and RE Adviser should meet to devise a plan/ timescale for the review of the Agreed Syllabus;

(ii) a report of progress to be made at the SACRE meeting to be held on 30th May 2012.

28 SACRE VISITS TO SCHOOLS
Report No. DCYP12017

The RE Adviser, Jan Thompson and Mr Riat had visited Raglan Primary School on 19th January 2012, and a report of the visit was circulated. (See Appendix 3). The RE Adviser commented on the successful visit which had taken place. The school showed excellent practice in RE and was a good example to others. It was noted that a visit to Balgowen Primary School was planned for Monday 6th February 2012. Councillor Adams and Councillor Mrs Manning would be accompanying the RE Adviser.

Details of school visits for the summer term were not yet available.

RESOLVED that the report of the school visit be noted.

29 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) 2012 Inter Faith Walks – 14TH and 15TH JULY 2012

The South London Inter Faith Group was celebrating thirty years of activity. For the last fifteen years they had organised an annual inter-faith walk and instead of one walk happening in July 2012 their vision is that there would be numerous walks happening all over South London on the same weekend (14th/15th July). The RE Adviser said that the idea of the walk was to stop at different places of worship on route. She understood that the nearest ready made walk centred around Cuffd. A planning meeting would be taking place in the Education Centre at Southwark Cathedral at 6.30pm on Wednesday 8th February 2012. If any one was interested in organising a walk for Bromley and attending the meeting they were asked to speak to the RE Adviser after the meeting for further details.

b) Young Inter-faith Projects - The NASACRE/Westhill Awards 2012/13

Three years ago an award from the above had helped to set up the Youth SACRE. The Westhill Foundation Trustees had allocated a sum of money for further awards to SACREs of up to £4,000 for comparable projects during the academic year 2012/13. Applications were invited for this next round of awards and details were passed to Fiona Hawkes and Jed Stone for further consideration.

c) Visit to St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

Mr Riat informed SACRE members that he had recently attended St Vincent's Catholic Primary School in Mottingham, where he had spoken to the children about Sikhism. The children had shown a lot of interest and he had enjoyed the visit very much.

30 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday 30th May 2012
Wednesday 7th November 2012
Wednesday 6th March 2013
Wednesday 5th June 2013

All meetings to start at 6.30pm

Emma Honey commented that the meeting date for 5th June 2013 might be difficult as this would be in the middle of the exam season. (The proposed date would receive further consideration.)

The Meeting ended at 8.35 pm

Chairman

Extracts from Subsidiary Guidance issued to inspectors January 2012

The following extracts are taken from official public guidance issued to all inspectors to support Section 5 inspection under the new Framework. The extracts include reference to:

- **Evaluating the curriculum** which includes the statement: 'Where a school does not provide the National Curriculum and RE, inspectors will need to fully explore the school's reasons.'
- **The curriculum and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** which includes clear reference to RE
- The place and definition of **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** within the inspection process.

THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL

Evaluating the curriculum

- n When considering whether the curriculum has sufficient breadth and balance and the extent to which it meets the needs, aptitudes and interests of pupils, inspectors should note the following.
- n A curriculum with breadth and balance in maintained schools is likely to consist of the National Curriculum subjects, religious education (RE) and a variety of other courses and programmes, including extra-curricular and enhancement activities put on by the school and its partners. Where a school does not provide the National Curriculum and RE, inspectors will need to fully explore the school's reasons. Inspectors are not expected to seek details of individual subject programmes of study.
- n Many secondary schools will be providing courses, or planning to provide courses, so that pupils can gain the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). Inspectors should note that provision of the EBacc is not compulsory.
- n Initial evidence will be found in school prospectuses, curriculum plans and, where relevant, in options booklets. Inspectors will want to discuss the breadth, balance and where relevant, choice and personalisation, of the curriculum with pupils and staff.
- n Inspectors will want to discuss with pupils their knowledge of courses and qualifications and the various progression routes available to them.

However, the increasing diversity and autonomy of schools and the decisions they make about the curriculum may present some contradictions. Inspectors will need to make a professional judgement about the appropriateness of the curriculum with respect to the specific circumstances of the school.

The curriculum and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- n Inspectors should gather evidence of the impact of the curriculum on developing aspects of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. This may be through:
 - n lesson observations where subjects promote aspects of SMSC provision; RE, art and music are obvious examples but discussion with pupils and staff will provide an important insight as to how SMSC is planned as part of the curriculum in other subjects
 - n observation of other activities that indicate the extent to which there is a coherent approach to promoting SMSC set out by the school and implemented through activities such as tutorials, citizenship programmes and discussions with pupils about their work
 - n evaluation of opportunities created by the school for pupils to take part in a range of artistic, cultural, sporting, dramatic, musical, mathematical, scientific, technological and, where appropriate, international events and activities that promote aspects of pupils' SMSC development.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

An important aspect of the overall effectiveness judgement is a consideration of how well the school contributes to the promotion of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- o All schools should be promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development and suitably preparing pupils for life. However, there is no need to present a detailed analysis in the report of the school's promotion of each of the four components of pupils' SMSC development.
- o Inspectors should consider the climate and ethos of the school and what effect this has on enabling pupils to grow and flourish, become confident individuals, and appreciate their own worth and that of others. In considering how well the school promotes pupils' SMSC, inspectors should take into account the impact of the range of opportunities provided for young people to develop their self esteem and confidence, which might occur both within the classroom, in terms of: teaching that encourages participation, creativity, reflection and independence; assessment and feedback that values pupils' work and/or effort; and activities that develop teamwork, leadership skills and self-reliance.

Defining spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- n Pupils' spiritual development is shown by their:
 - n beliefs, religious or otherwise, which inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people's feelings and values
 - n sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them, including the intangible
 - n use of imagination and creativity in their learning
 - n willingness to reflect on their experiences.
- n Pupils' moral development is shown by their:
 - n ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and their readiness to apply this understanding in their own lives
 - n understanding of the consequences of their actions
 - n interest in investigating, and offering reasoned views about, moral and ethical issues.
- n Pupils' social development is shown by their:
 - n use of a range of social skills in different contexts, including working and socialising with pupils from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds
 - n willingness to participate in a variety of social settings, cooperating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively
 - n interest in, and understanding of, the way communities and societies function at a variety of levels.
- n Pupils' cultural development is shown by their:
 - n understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage
 - n willingness to participate in, and respond to, for example, artistic, musical, sporting, mathematical, technological, scientific and cultural opportunities
 - n interest in exploring, understanding of, and respect for cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity, as shown by their attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities.

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DRAFT SACRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN JANUARY 2012 – MARCH 2013 (4 TERMS)

Annual Financial Year allocation of Adviser Days – 35 = £11,375 + associated venue and professional development £12,000

4 Term Allocation = 47 (including Spring Term 2012 already budgeted and paid but not used)

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Date	Costs	Success criteria
Youth SACRE	At meeting discuss projects that YS would like to pursue Reps to attend future SACRE meetings	RE Adviser	Termly	8 days of RE Adviser's time (2 per term) £2,600	Youth SACRE able to enhance the work of SACRE and teaching of RE in schools
Make a Faith Directory for schools' use	Organise the information gained so far into a useful directory Organise a training event for interested speakers Distribute finished document (either as booklet or via internet)	RE Adviser and interested members of the main SACRE committee Adviser	During 2012 Early 2012.	2 days' adviser time: £650 Venue: EDC - £50 Admin: £300 Printing etc: £20 Cost of printing guidance/arranging for internet space	A directory of the faith communities of Bromley, including addresses of places of worship that would welcome visits from school groups and contact details of individuals who would speak at collective worship and RE lessons for all Bromley schools
Evaluate SACRE work and establish priorities	Continuous self evaluation process using the new NASACRE document	RE Consultant All SACRE members to discuss.	Termly update of self evaluation (Adviser) Summer review to SACRE (Adviser) Report – Autumn 2012	4 days adviser time £1,300	Identify further areas for development towards an advanced SACRE – to be incorporated as appropriate into future development plans. Results to be incorporated into the annual report.
To comply with the statutory requirement to implement a 5-year review of the current syllabus and to draw up a costed plan for the preparatory work in convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference and associated work in drafting the new syllabus	Research, draft and cost plan with timescales. Present to SACRE and LA for budgetary consideration	RE Consultant, Teachers, SACRE members, LA	By March 2012	3 days £975	A syllabus for Bromley which reflects the current national thinking on RE and the 21 st century

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Objective	Action	Responsibility	Date	Costs	Success criteria
To prepare agenda, respond to any action from previous meetings and plan ongoing programme for SACRE committee meetings.	Arrange and attend 3 pre agenda meetings per year Write papers and reports for the meeting to LA timetable	Clerk Chairman RE consultant RE Consultant	Termly meetings Including SACRE meetings – 10 days	RE Adviser 10 days £3,250	Effective meetings with Action points carried out by Members between meetings.
Training of committee members	Attendance at 3 meetings per year Short training during each meeting using NASACRE material	All Members RE CONSULTANT AND ALL MEMBERS	At each meeting	RE Consultant to plan and provide training materials and disseminate any results 2 days £650	Further understanding by members of the role of SACRE and the teaching methods to be used in schools
SACRE consider reports and initiatives from NASACRE	Consider relevant material from National SACRE Conference and NASACRE AGM	RE Adviser/ Chairman and nominated rep	Following NASACRE meetings summer term	Cost of two annual conferences and travel 2 days adviser time £650 £500 conference costs	Discussion and actions taken on the future of RE and CW Attend two national conferences and report back Adviser and interested members attendance and discussions held in summer term
To report annually on the work of SACRE.	Collect information on exam data and SACRE work RE Consultant to write an annual report by December on the previous academic year.	RE Adviser to write, Chairman to read, Clerk to circulate.	Deadline end December 2012	RE Adviser time 4 days £1,300	Completed on time and copies provided for SACRE members, Director, Assistant Director, CYP portfolio holder, libraries, schools and their governing bodies

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Objective	Action	Responsibility	Date	Costs	Success criteria
To monitor standards of RE and CW in Bromley Schools.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attend school visits and consider reports 2. Look at alternative ways to monitor standards 3. Provide data for members on RE examination results in Secondary Schools. 	<p>RE Adviser SACRE members one per year</p> <p>Data team at Civic Centre RE Adviser</p>	<p>Up to 8 school visits each year (2 per term)</p> <p>Part of annual report. Discuss at Spring meeting</p>	<p>RE Adviser – 8 half day visits and 8 half day report writing (4 days) £1,300</p>	<p>Meaningful visits or discussion completed and reports discussed at SACRE meetings.</p> <p>Data provided, with analysis for Spring meeting</p>
Monitor National RE reports from OfSTED Ensure schools are aware of the statutory nature of RE	Request LA to write to schools on statutory nature of RE .	School Improvement Service: head of Learning	Termly summary of any relevant Ofsted outcomes to SACRE		All schools following the agreed syllabus
Annual Event		RE Adviser	Summer 2012	4 days Adviser Time £1,300 + Venue Costs £500	

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Visit to Raglan Primary School – January 19th 2012.

This visit was undertaken by the RE Consultant Mrs Smith-Orr, Mrs Thompson and Mr Riat. Raglan Primary is a two form entry school with a very local catchment area which makes it an excellent example of a local community school. There is also a Nursery and two special language classes. The first impression on entering the school is of a hive of activity, with every wall covered in excellent displays and information. The last Ofsted inspection result was 'Good with outstanding areas' and a Citizenship inspection last year came out as outstanding. Religious Education is taught to Years 0-4 by 4 teachers, while Years 5 and 6 are taught by subject teachers.

We were met by Mrs Dobson, the Deputy Head and Mrs Duncan, the RE coordinator, who work closely together on RE and Collective Worship. They have an annual planning meeting to review the policy and curriculum for the school. At the last meeting they decided to focus on Attainment Target 2 and this was discussed during our visit. They are also hoping to make a list of speakers and to look at provision for ICT in religious education. We were shown examples of work and noted that the marking was very clear and that a useful table which indicates coverage of the syllabus had been devised by Mrs Duncan. We also briefly discussed Collective Worship and the weekly timetable for the pupils. There are currently no withdrawals from worship or lessons.

We were given a quick tour of the school by Mrs Sutton, the Head Teacher, and discussed the many projects that the school undertakes each year. This includes an annual parade through the adjoining streets and a gathering in the local park. The pupils also go on various visits to places of worship and have good links with St Luke's church nearby. This was followed by a whole school worship on the theme of the Chinese New Year; the pupils were thoroughly engaged by the story being acted out and the arrival of a Chinese Dragon. They all joined in the singing and were given the opportunity to reflect on what they had experienced.

The last part of the visit was a lesson observation of a Year 2 class taught by Mrs Ford. The pupils were learning about Buddhism through stories and recapped on some things they knew and then listened to the story of The Monkey King while looking at slides which had been sourced by the teacher. They were very interested and had a lively conversation on who was the best leader and king in the story and why. They then went to tables to write their ideas on leaf shapes which were to be put onto a 'tree of enlightenment'.

This was a delightful visit to a school who clearly take the provision of religious education very seriously. Mrs Dobson and Mrs Duncan both expressed an interest in being involved in updating the syllabus and Mrs Duncan would like to join the SACRE committee.

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