

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Minutes of the meeting held at 6.00 pm on 27 February 2019

Present:

Reverend Roger Bristow (Chairman)

Councillors Kevin Brooks, Russell Mellor and Chris Pierce
Mrs D Angell, Ms H Arnold, Mrs V Corbyn, Mr S Gupta,
Mr R Hagley, Mr S Mahmood, Mr A Nandra, Mr C Town,
Reverend S Varney and Mrs E Whitman

Also Present:

Julia Andrew, LBB Head of School Standards
Carol Arnfield, LBB Head of Service for Early Years,
Schools Standards and Adult Education
Stacey Burman, SACRE RE Advisor
Lee Kings, Bishop Justus Church of England School
Dr Omar Taha, Al-Emaan Centre (Keston Mosque)

25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor David Jefferys, Councillor Keith Onslow and Samantha Barnett. Apologies for absence were also received from Councillor Robert Evans, and Councillor Russell Mellor attended as his substitute (until 6.30pm).

26 NEW MEMBERS

The Chairman welcomed Lee Kings, Bishop Justus Church of England School to the meeting, and introductions took place. The Chairman advised members that Mr Kings had offered to become a teacher representative on the SACRE. Mr Kings informed members that he was a secondary RE teacher at Bishop Justus C of E School, which was part of the Aquinas Trust. Within the Trust, he was the lead on RE for the primary schools, and ran a network for the primary RE subject leaders. Following a discussion, members unanimously agreed that Mr Kings should join the SACRE as a teacher representative.

The Chairman advised SACRE members that this would be the last meeting that Church of England representatives, Virginia Corbyn and Reverend Steve Varney, would be attending. Reverend Varney would be retiring at the end of March 2019, and Mrs Corbyn had been promoted to Deputy Director of Education of the Diocese of Rochester, and would no longer be able to offer the same level of service to Bromley SACRE. It was noted that after Easter, Mrs Jan Thompson would be representing the Diocese of Rochester on the

Bromley SACRE. The Chairman extended his thanks, on behalf of the SACRE, to Mrs Corbyn and Reverend Varney for their valuable input and all they had done for the Bromley SACRE, and members congratulated them on their promotion and retirement.

RESOLVED that Mr Lee Kings, Bishop Justus Church of England School – Aquinas Trust join the Bromley SACRE as teacher representative.

27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

28 COMPLIANCE OF THE GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)

No breaches of the GDPR were reported.

29 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31ST OCTOBER 2018

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 31st October 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

B) MATTERS ARISING

Minute 16B): Matters arising

The PDF version of the document ‘Reflective Pools – Refreshing Collective Worship in Bromley Schools’ had been circulated to members by the Clerk on 2nd November 2018.

Minute 18B): ‘Ramadan 2019 – A Simple Guide for Schools’

The Chairman informed members that the SACRE RE Advisor had met with Dr Taha, and the revised guide had been provided in the agenda pack. This would be discussed further under minute item 30: Oral Update and Publications.

Minute 18C): Commission on Religious Education – ‘Religion and Worldviews: The Way Forward’

The Commission on RE – Final Report summary, produced by the SACRE RE Advisor, had been circulated to members by the Clerk on 8th November 2018.

Minute 18E): ‘How relevant is Religious Education in the 21st Century?’

A copy of Professor Cooling’s PowerPoint presentation had been circulated to members by the Clerk on 21st February 2019.

Minute 18E): ‘How should Religious Education respond to a changing religious landscape?’

The Chairman tabled a summary of the event, and this would be discussed further under minute item 30: Oral Update and Publications.

Minute 19): Revised Bromley Agreed Syllabus

All SACRE members had been invited to attend the Agreed Syllabus Conference that had taken place prior to the SACRE meeting, and this would be discussed further under minute item 33: Revised Bromley Agreed Syllabus.

Minute 21): Collective Worship

The LBB Head of School Standards advised members that she had met with a representative from the company supplying Fronter, and work was progressing towards setting up a generic login for schools and SACRE members to view Fronter. The Chairman informed members that he had recently met with Jared Nehra, LBB Director of Education, who was keen to establish a specific website for Bromley schools which would allow anyone who needed information to access it. If this happened, SACRE would have an area on the website.

Minute 22): SACRE Draft Action Plan

A copy of the SACRE Draft Action Plan 2018-19, produced by the SACRE RE Advisor, had been provided in the agenda pack, and this would be discussed further under minute item 36: SACRE Draft Action Plan.

30 ORAL UPDATE & PUBLICATIONS

A.) 'RAMADAN 2019 – A SIMPLE GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS' – DR OMAR TAHA

The Chairman welcomed Dr Omar Taha, Al-Emaan Centre (Keston Mosque) to the meeting, and thanked him for working with the SACRE RE Advisor to produce the amended version of the document 'Ramadan 2019 – A Guide for Schools', following suggestions made at the last meeting of the SACRE Members had been provided with a copy of the document in the agenda pack.

A member enquired what the dates would be for Ramadan 2019. Dr Taha responded that the precise dates would not be known until nearer the time, but it would begin around the 5th or 6th May, and end around the 3rd or 4th June 2019. This was because the Islamic calendar was a lunar calendar, which meant that the dates moved by approximately eleven days each year. Mr Mahmood requested that a sentence be included to explain how the dates moved each year.

ACTION: SACRE RE ADVISOR

Once the additional text had been included, it was agreed that the document could be uploaded to Fronter and circulated to schools via the School Bulletin and teacher RE networks. The Clerk would also provide Mr Kings with a copy to share with the schools across the Aquinas Trust.

ACTION: SACRE RE ADVISOR / LBB Head of School Standards / Clerk

B.) NASACRE AGM

The Chairman advised members that he would be attending the NASACRE Conference and AGM, which was being held on Wednesday 22nd May 2019 at

the DoubleTree by Hilton, Manchester. The theme of the conference would be 'Cohesive Communities and Effective Partnerships; RE near and far (local, national, global)', and he would report back on the NASACRE Conference and AGM at the next meeting of the SACRE.

C.) 'HOW SHOULD RELIGIOUS EDUCATION RESPOND TO A CHANGING RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE?' – NATCEN SOCIAL RESEARCH

The Chairman reminded members that he had attended a presentation entitled 'How should Religious Education respond to a changing religious landscape?', at NatCen on 29th November 2018. A summary of the event was tabled at the meeting, and is attached to the minutes at Appendix A. The Chairman said that it had been an interesting event with three main speakers: Rudi Lockhart (Chief Executive Officers, Religious Education Council for England and Wales), Andrew Copson (Chief Executive, Humanists UK) and Dr Lois Lee (Programme Leader, Understanding Unbelief). It was felt that as there had not been a speaker putting across clearly positive views of religion, the speakers were not balanced and had been chosen deliberately to cater to an opposing view.

The Chairman noted that the figures provided in Rudi Lockhart's presentation stated that in 2010, 84% of the global population were religious, which was predicted to increase to 87% by 2050. The Chairman highlighted that this suggested that religion was growing worldwide, and that teaching about religion was therefore more important, not less. A member noted that the statistics provided stated that in 2017, 65% of the UK was non-religious, however that would not necessarily mean that they were not interested in Religious Education. The SACRE RE Advisor said that when pupil surveys were carried out, Religious Education tended to be a popular subject. Members agreed, and considered that this was because it gave everyone a chance to engage and share their own views.

31 SACRE ANNUAL REPORT

SACRE members had been provided with a copy of the Annual Report 2017-2018. The SACRE RE Advisor drew the attention of members to the table 'GCSE Full Course in Religious Studies 2013-18' on page 22 of the agenda pack. There was a bold line after the data for 2017, due to the new GCSE specifications and new marking schemes having been implemented from 2018. There was now a new marking structure to replace the grading system. Grade 4 was considered to be a 'standard pass', and Grades 9-5 were considered to be a 'strong pass'.

The information regarding the number of exam entries per school, at both GCSE and A Level, had been presented in a table to show the changes in numbers more clearly, with substantial increase or decreases in the number of entries being highlighted in green or red. In future reports, each year's results could then be added to the table, allowing readers to see any trends that were developing. A member noted that the number of GCSE entrants at

Harris Girls' Academy Bromley had dropped from 106 to 0. The SACRE RE Advisor responded that most schools taught the course over two years, but some taught it over a year which would be under the old specification and the results would not count.

A member considered that it would be interesting to compare the Religious Studies exam statistics with the result of Maths, Literacy and other popular subjects. The Chairman responded that there was not the scope to do so in this report, but agreed that it would be fascinating to see the outcome. The SACRE RE Advisor noted that if this information was available, it was something that could be included in the Agreed Syllabus.

ACTION: SACRE RE Advisor

A member enquired as to how Bromley's number of entrants for the Religious Studies courses compared to national figures. The SACRE RE Advisor responded that she had not been provided with that data from the Local Authority, and when trying to research it herself, had found that each website listed varying figures. The LBB Head of School Standards said she did not believe that the Local Authority held this data, but that she would ask.

ACTION: LBB Head of School Standards

A member noted that the number of entrants for the GCSE Full Course in Religious Studies had increased at Coopers School, Newstead Wood School and The Ravensbourne School. The SACRE RE Advisor said that if these schools attended the secondary RE network meeting, she would be speaking with them about what they had done to increase the number of entrants.

The SACRE RE Advisor informed members that in future Annual Reports, there was the possibility of having a section to demonstrate how the SACRE would and / or could contribute to the priorities of the Local Authority. The LBB Head of Service for Early Years, Schools Standards and Adult Education advised members that each Head of Service within the Local Authority would have their own service priorities that related to 'Building a Better Bromley'. Following a discussion, members considered that there would be Education priorities that could be included, as well as priorities of other bodies, such as the Bromley Youth Council, Independent Advisory Group and Safer Neighbourhood Board, which could be linked in.

Following a discussion, members agreed that they were happy to approve the Bromley SACRE Annual Report 2017-2018. The SACRE RE Advisor informed members that the document would now be forwarded on to NASACRE and the Department for Education, and would be published on the Council's website.

ACTION: Clerk

RESOLVED that the SACRE Annual Report 2017-2018 be agreed.

32 OFSTED DRAFT FRAMEWORK CONSULTATION

The LBB Head of School Standards advised SACRE members that Ofsted had launched a public consultation on proposals to make changes to the

education inspection framework, which would close on Friday 5th April 2019. The new framework proposed a shift in focus towards inspecting the substance of education, what is taught and how it is taught, with learning outcomes considered only within that wider context rather than in isolation.

SACRE members had been provided with a summary of Ofsted's draft framework consultation, which had been produced by the SACRE RE Advisor, and highlighted key elements linked to the provision of Religious Education within the proposed new framework. The LBB Head of School Standards informed members that the Local Authority was planning to respond to the consultation following feedback from the different service areas. A copy of three main questions, to which it was felt the SACRE could contribute to the response, were tabled:

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to introduce a 'quality of education' judgement?

6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal not to look at non-statutory internal progress and attainment data and our reasons why?

7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal that inspectors should normally use the non-specialist curriculum as their primary source of evidence in assessing the extent to which the school meets the quality of education criteria?

Members noted that they felt they needed to read the background to the questions in more detail in order to contribute to a response. It was agreed that the LBB Head of School Standards would provide the clerk with the executive / summary document for circulation to members. It was requested that any responses be returned by the deadline of Monday 11th March 2019.

ACTION: LBB Head of School Standards / Clerk

33 REVISED BROMLEY AGREED SYLLABUS

SACRE members had been invited to attend an Agreed Syllabus Conference, which had taken place prior to the start of the SACRE meeting. It had been led by the SACRE RE Advisor, and attended by the LBB Head of School Standards, the SACRE Chairman, Mr Lee Kings and SACRE members – Denise Angell, Virginia Corbyn, Arvinder Nandra, Mr Mahmood and Christopher Town. Members were provided with the proposed layout of the Bromley Agreed Syllabus, produced by the SACRE RE Advisor, a copy of which is attached at Appendix 2.

A member noted that there was a 'Why Teach RE?' section, and suggested that the opposites of the questions could be considered, such as the 'Risks of Not Teaching RE'. The SACRE RE Advisor noted that the questions had been done from an RE leaders point of view, but could instead be from the pupils' point of view, and stated as 'Why do we learn RE?'.

The LBB Head of School Standards suggested that the 'Our RE' section could include a self-evaluation tool for RE Co-ordinators. The SACRE RE Advisor agreed, and said she could also make reference to the RE Quality Mark. The LBB Head of School Standards said she felt the suggested layout would be very helpful, particularly for inexperienced RE subject leaders. A member noted that schemes of work took time to produce, but that these were needed by primary schools, as it was something practical to help them.

Members expressed that they felt it was important to include 'pupil voice', as suggested on the proposed layout, and asked how the SACRE RE Advisor intended to get access to pupil surveys in schools. It was noted that it was particularly important to know why pupils did not study Religious Education, as how they perceived it may be false. The SACRE RE Advisor said that she would be asking the teachers that attended the Primary RE Network to provide her with survey results that could be included, and it was hoped that the same could be done for secondary once the first network meeting had taken place.

34 RELATIONSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS

The SACRE RE Advisor informed members that the Primary RE Network had taken place on the afternoon of Tuesday 15th January 2019, and had been hosted by the Al-Emaan Centre. Teachers from sixteen primary schools had attended, which equated to around 30% of Bromley primary schools. The event had been evaluated well, and members had been provided with a 'Primary RE Network Update', which had been produced by the SACRE RE Advisor.

Dr Taha said that as an observer of the network, the SACRE RE Advisor had been very engaging, and it had been nice to welcome everyone to the mosque. A SACRE teacher representative that had attended the Primary RE Network agreed that it had been a good event, and she had enjoyed looking around the mosque. It had been beneficial to talk to other teachers about subject knowledge of other faiths, and discuss strategies. It was noted that there needed to be an end time stated on the invite, and that the network should either take place during, or after, the school day.

The next Primary RE Network would be taking place on Tuesday 19th March 2019, 1.30pm-4.30pm at Warren Road Primary School. SACRE members were urged to talk to the schools that they had links with and encourage them to attend. It was noted that SACRE members were welcome to attend the network meeting. It had been agreed that the school would share some of their pupils work, and that this could then be brought back to the SACRE. Going forward, it was suggested that the network be held at other places of worship, if possible, as it was good for teachers to network and gain knowledge.

35 INTER-FAITH COMPETITION

The SACRE RE Advisor informed members that at the Primary RE Network, teachers had been agreeable to taking part in the calendar competition, that had been discussed at the SACRE meeting on 31st October 2018. The theme for KS1 pupils artwork was 'special or religious artefacts' and for KS2 it was 'special or religious foods'. Schools had been asked to bring the completed artwork to the Primary RE Network meeting on Tuesday 19th March 2019, at which the Borough winners would be selected. The SACRE RE Advisor would provide the Clerk with a copy of the competition flyer for circulation, and members were asked to promote the competition to the schools that they had links with.

The SACRE RE Advisor said that the first meeting of the Secondary RE Network would be taking place at Bishop Justus Church of England School, on Wednesday 1st May 2019, and SACRE members were welcome to attend.

36 SACRE DRAFT ACTION PLAN

SACRE members were provided with a copy of the SACRE Draft Action Plan for 2018-19, which had been produced by the SACRE RE Advisor.

The SACRE RE Advisor said that the items listed were very specific, but had included a breakdown of what was to be achieved, and the stages involved to get there. The table had been colour coded, with the green highlighted rows indicating what had been achieved, and the red highlighted rows showing where problems had been encountered.

It was noted that some actions had progressed since the table was produced, with the primary school network well underway; the secondary school network meeting now scheduled; and the Agreed Syllabus Conference having taken place prior to the SACRE meeting. As the SACRE Annual Report 2017-18 and the Ramadan 2019 guidance had been approved earlier in the meeting, subject to the extra sentence being added in to the guidance, these actions could now be highlighted as completed.

RESOLVED that the SACRE Draft Action Plan for 2018-19 be noted.

37 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman informed members that his meeting with Jared Nehra, LBB Director of Education had been extremely positive, and he had been very keen to support the SACRE. There had been an offer to meet with the Chairman on a termly basis, and to facilitate his attendance and presentation at the school Governors annual training session and primary and secondary Headteacher forums. As mentioned earlier, the proposed website for Bromley schools was something that the Chairman would keep pushing for. It was noted that the LBB Director of Education hoped to attend the next meeting of the SACRE.

The Chairman reminded SACRE members about the invitation circulated to them by the Clerk on behalf of Dr Taha for the 'Visit my Mosque!' event, which was taking place between 11.00am and 4.00pm on Sunday 3rd March 2019, and members were encouraged to attend.

38 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

6.00pm, Wednesday 3rd July 2019
6.00pm, Wednesday 13th November 2019
6.00pm, Wednesday 4th March 2020

The Meeting ended at 8.03 pm

Chairman

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How should RE respond to a changing world? Minute Annex

STATISTICS

UK

1983 - 69% religious, 40% CofE

2017 - 65% non religious

2002 - 31% CofE

2017 - 14% CofE

Under 24 - 17% religious, 2% CofE

Rudi Lockhart: REC

Global population

2010 84% religious

2050 87% religious

Religious and non religious world views are constantly shifting ... curriculum should be able to recognise this fact.

Critical overview of category of religion, not just the facts but also the impact and practice. How does it matter to its adherents and to others?

Worldview is a slippery term; meaning different things to different people. Corporate and individual ... we all have a worldview.

Place of non religious worldviews in RE: not new in principle but needs serious consideration. Not just adding in Humanism, there are other non religious worldviews.

Not a dilution of religious teaching but a recognition that there are other worldviews which engage with the same areas.

Criticism of use of the term worldview both due to its historical meaning and the examples given by the Commission.

Dr Lois Lee: Unbelief

Most significant statistic is the decline in religious belief amongst young people. Many of those who are described as non religious identify as Atheists.

- Negative atheism: living life as though God doesn't exist.
- Positive atheism: I know that God doesn't exist.

Beyond 'unbelief' and 'non-belief' are 'alternative beliefs'.

Understanding Unbelief programme 2017-2020.

How should RE respond?

Looking forward - understanding 'Unbelief'

Lack of knowledge / understanding.

Conceptual confusion around non religious worldviews and worldviews.

Beyond conventional concepts of how worldviews manifest.

Taking diversity seriously.

Integrating research and teaching: Exploring Unbelief in the RE Classroom - handling varieties of non religious worldviews.

Write down the first 8 words that come to mind. What do you associate with: God, Religion, Atheism, Agnosticism. ?

Andrew Copse: Humanist

We should avoid being over preoccupied with 'identity' which is distinguishable from 'belief' and even 'practice'.

Advocates for a proportionate level of content in RE curriculum in line with views of population.

Wishes to shift the focus from religion to non religious views.

QUESTIONS:

Cultural literacy is as important as religious, how is that to be included?

Shapes emerging from research?

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Introduction

- Accessible to all
- from HLT and Council websites
- Mission statement
- explanation of 3 (or 4?) below sections
- Password to move to further pages, or contact xxx
- introduction from Chair
- purpose of syllabus (Establish entitlement, standards, promote continuity+ cohesion and public understanding)

Why Teach RE?

1. Definitions (how we refer to RE, key words) or in intro?
2. Self/Citizens
3. Community/Society- including: B Values
4. School/Curriculum? (inc. skills, ICT, GTC)
5. legal requirements
Using sections on PSHE, SMSC, importance statement
6. Pupil voice? School survey results?

What is RE?

- Religious Literacy AT1
- Big questions AT2 (thinking, reflecting, sharing)
- pedagogy
- Skills (spectrum, progression, AfL)
Or.....

Progression in RE

- Skills (spectrum, progression, AfL)
- Pupil samples and moderation?

Our RE

- Calendar?
- 'factsheet' appendix
- photos, pupil samples - moderation
- competitions
- Guidance – philosophical enquiry, artefacts and visits/visitors etc.
- SoW?

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