

Report No.
ED13026

London Borough of Bromley

PART 1 - PUBLIC

Decision Maker: **Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education**

Date: **6 March 2013**

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

TITLE: SCHOOL VISITS

Contact Officer: Penny Smith-Orr, RE Adviser
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Chief Officer: Terry Parkin, Executive Director, Education and Care Services

Ward: N/A

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 School visits during the Summer and Autumn term were organised and undertaken by the Chair of SACRE to allow the RE Adviser time to proceed with writing the new scheme of work and syllabus review as agreed by the committee.
- 1.2 Two visits were undertaken in the Autumn term: Castlecombe Primary and Hayes Secondary Schools.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 **Members to volunteer to attend forthcoming visits to schools.**

Bromley SACRE visit to Castlecombe Primary School, Mottingham

Wednesday 21st November 2012

SACRE Team: Cllr Roger Charsley, Mrs Samantha Barnett and Mr Martin Sweet

Introduction:

Castlecombe Primary School is a one form entry Community School in Mottingham. During our 2½ hour visit, we were able to observe their school collective worship, and year 4 RE lesson and also talk to their RE coordinator and head teacher, Mr Tim Smith. Our short visit enabled us to see that the school lived up to its philosophy of providing the children with a caring, happy school and to encourage each child to feel that they are a valued member of our community.

The school is an 'estate school' and the pupils obviously reflect the culture and background. It is reckoned that most children come from homes of no faith rather than atheist outlook. Information from the most recent census suggests that whilst parents don't have to declare their faith, it would appear that there were a few children from non-white ethnic background but not many with an active Christian or other faith background. Census information provided by the school would suggest that 70% families did not declare their faith, and of those who did, Christian - 11%, Muslim - 0.03%, other religion 19% and those who said that had not religion - 0.03%. This means that RE in this school has a job to do and, given the following observations of both collective worship and RE, the school is doing its best to impact this. The school relies heavily upon the Pupil Premium and has a higher than average number of special needs children.

Collective worship:

The assembly at 10.25am was well structured and a delight to observe. The children entered in an orderly way and sat quietly in rows on the floor or on benches (year 6) listening to classical music as they waited for the whole school to join them. Many of the teaching staff sat in the hall and the whole feeling was one of quiet enjoyment.

The collective worship started with "Who put the colours in the rainbow?" to pre-recorded track played off a laptop through the hall's speakers. The sound quality and volume was good and encouraged the children to join in without prompting. Judging by the gentle swaying of some of the children, they obviously enjoy singing on a regular basis, music and signing being a key part of the school's collective worship.

Mr Tim Smith led the collective worship using story, pictures and also, delightfully, involving one of the children. He continued his current theme of finding out about historical heroes, and today's talk was about Gladys Aylward (1903-1970). Using resources from the internet, including a PowerPoint of photographs and a printed off story, he took the children through the story of Gladys Aylward from her youth to the end of her life. He explained that she was a Christian lady, who whilst quite short, made a great impact upon the people she sought to help in China. The children continued to listen really well, giving the impression that they are used to quiet listening.

At one point of the story, explaining that Gladys Aylward had to learn Chinese, Mr Smith asked a Chinese speaking pupil to pronounce the name that had been given to Gladys Aylward. Mr Smith sensitively covered aspects of Gladys's Christian commitment and calling in a way that all the children could access and appreciate. He concluded on the theme of strength in a way that made sure that the children could see someone like Gladys Aylward as a role model and closed the collective worship by inviting the children to listen to prepared prayer.

We noticed the orderly way children would leave their place to go and get a tissue. Teachers were not asked and these children did not interrupt or disturb the overall sense of 'specialness' to the time. Observing this as visitors, we had the distinct impression that children valued this time in

the hall, treating the occasion with great respect, by their quiet attentiveness, yet also the way they felt relaxed enough to get a tissue. It was noticeable that not one of the teachers disciplined or spoke to children, no one asked for quiet, which speaks so much for the attitude children have towards collective worship in this school.

The assembly finished with raffle prize giving, which was respectful, calm and joyful for everyone, especially those who won a Kermit!

The assembly finished at 10.50, giving the overall impression that this was a special part of the school day that, even walking to and from the classroom, was valued by all the children. Children also controlled the hall lighting and laptop, set out chairs and benches.

Over a term, the school follows various assembly themes. For example, last term, Mr Smith followed an 'Olympic' values theme. Normally, he will look at key calendar dates and also promote key moral values such as courage, loyalty, friendship, knowing the difference between right and wrong, celebrating differences and community. They have a number of assemblies led by the vicar from Christ Church in Chislehurst; for instance one during the week following our visit.

RE lessons:

After break time, we were invited to attend a Year 4 RE lesson. Whilst the class teacher was on PPA time, the cover teacher, Mrs Sam Horton, took the class. Mrs Horton covers all the RE in Years 1-4 in this way. The RE for Years 5 and 6 is covered by their class teachers.

Mr Smith added later that they do have some visits from time to time from local churches and from Spinnaker, a Bromley based Christian organisation.

The lesson was the first of a new series on 'Symbols' and was clearly based upon Bromley Agreed Syllabus and the Bromley 2004 scheme of work/lesson ideas pack. Mrs Horton started with the children on the carpet and introduced the theme with a game, asking the children to work with a partner. They then went to their tables and tried to work out what these six 'every day' symbols might mean. (for example: scouts badge, danger sign). Completing this, Mrs Horton then discussed their suggestions and gave the children the answers. They then returned to the carpet and Mrs Horton used the interactive board to show the learning objective: *I know some religious symbols and know why they are important.*

She then showed them two 'religious' symbols. One was the Sikh khanda and the other a Buddhist 'wheel'. The children were asked to discuss in twos what these symbols might represent. Suggestions were invited and plenty of the children felt they could engage with the lesson, mostly in an orderly and very constructive way. Indeed, some suggestions were really insightful. One child commented that they had a Buddhist relation.

The children were then sent back to their tables to undertake the second learning objective: *I can design a symbol to represent myself.* The children were asked to draw around a circle template. There was a brief feedback time at the end of the lesson.

Discussions with staff:

After the lesson we chatted to Mrs Horton, asking her the 'big issues' regarding RE at her school. The main problem would be to get resources into the hands of the teachers and the fact that the current syllabus/scheme of work is now dated and not easy to use since the resources are not always available. They have a few resources in the school but she admitted that, for Years 1-4, she had to 'create most of the resources, using some trusted website (REonline, REQuest and so on). This is a key issue that SACRE needs to address as we come up to publishing our new syllabus.

Exercise books we looked at reflected the ability of the class and demonstrated a keen interest in the subject. However, the pressure on teachers to deliver core subjects, for example Maths and English), made it clear that RE is understandably not a main focus of the curriculum. However, this illustrated to the team one of the issues facing the teaching of RE in schools.

We later spoke with Lorna Burge, the RE coordinator for the school. Lorna is relatively new to the post and is also responsible for humanities (geography and history).

Lorna concurred with Mrs Horton's suggestions that the current syllabus/scheme of work is not easy to use and any subsequent revision by SACRE must take into account the fact that teachers do not have sufficient resources or time to research each lesson/topic. The Years 5 and 6 teachers integrate aspects of their RE within the 'creative' or, what Mr Smith, called a 'topic-style' curriculum. This was tabulated out in their planning.

The school does not subscribe to Bromley's RE support package and therefore Lorna does not access LA for meetings with other Bromley teachers.

Key issues to take forward to SACRE

1. New syllabus needs to reflect the fact that fewer children come from 'Christian' background, which means the Christian sections need to be clearer with a content that does not imply familial underpinning.
2. Whilst there are other children of other faiths in the school, the proportion of other faiths within the curriculum needs to be balanced against the non-religious background.
3. As we produce the syllabus, careful thought needs to be given to resourcing and training, especially if schools do not subscribe to Bromley's support scheme.
4. At present, this school is not an academy – if it becomes one, what happens to the Bromley syllabus in this particular school?
5. There is a clear opportunity for faith groups (especially local churches to offer resources and to support collective worship).

Martin Sweet. Chair of Bromley SACRE

Bromley SACRE visit to Hayes School Monday 3rd December 2012

SACRE Team: Mr Mahmood, Cllr A Manning and Mr Martin Sweet

Introduction:

This was the second SACRE visit to Hayes School in recent years. The observations and knowledge gained from our previous visit gave us a suitable platform for gaining a greater awareness of the continuing quality of RE in this school, thus showing the value of follow-up visits. Mr Addison informed us prior to our visit that there were no scheduled RE lessons but suggested we sit in on a couple of Philosophy and Ethics A level lessons and that he had also organised a presentation by some Year 9 students.

Mr Simon Addison heads up this department and leads a team of four specialist teachers, with no staff from other departments being asked to undertake RE lessons. This inevitably ensures that this is a strong department, and illustrates the support given to this subject by the schools management. It was clear to us that this is a thriving, successful department of which Hayes should be proud.

Our visit started at 9.35am with a brief meeting with Mr Simon Addison where he explained that he was also responsible for monitoring the SMSC (Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural) programme in the school. RE is a part of this SMSC programme which is monitored throughout the school and examples of good practice collated.

Year 12 A level Ethics lesson

At 9.45am, we visited an Ethics lesson for Year 12 students taught by Mrs Rachel Boyden. The learning intention was to understand who Bentham was and his theory of utilitarianism (i.e. the greatest good for the greatest number). The lesson was interactive and used interactive white board with various media, including video clips, to stimulate discussion and reaction. This was an interesting session.

Year 9 presentation

At 10am, we were given a presentation by some Year 9 students on the topic of 'Religious Education and Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural development at Hayes School'.

This took the form of the students showing us their own presentation illustrating various aspects of what RE meant to them. Mr Addison informed us that he had asked the students to prepare this for our visit as we were not scheduled to see any RE lessons, and that he had not had a chance to see or edit their PowerPoint presentation. His confidence in his students was well grounded in that they shared their thoughts confidently and also fielded questions from us about their own views of RE.

The pupils confirmed that RE played an important and vibrant part in their education at Hayes. They especially valued the fact that RE allowed them to share and it did not seem so 'target driven' as other curriculum areas. We noted that their presentation would be a useful method of informing the whole of SACRE, and we discussed with Mr Addison the possibility of a group of students giving a presentation at a future SACRE meeting.

What impressed us most was the way these students were able to articulate their appreciation of RE as a subject, and were obviously of the opinion that they benefitted individually from having RE in their curriculum. At 10.30, we were treated to refreshments

with the department staff plus some Year 7 students who were more than keen to tell us about their experiences and appreciation of RE at Hayes.

Year 13 A level Philosophy lesson

At 11am we were invited to join in Year 13 Philosophy with RE teacher Katie Turner. In this lesson, we chatted briefly to the students about their aspirations and the way they valued their work, which had clearly influenced some of them in the decision about Higher Education subjects.

Our morning finished with a further discussion with Mr Addison to reflect upon our visit and identify ways that SACRE can support Hayes School and, encouragingly, how SACRE can make use of this excellent department in inspiring good RE in the catchment primary schools.

In our discussions, we considered the quality of RE that Year 7 students presented when they first joined the school and Mr Addison felt that, while there was a wide range of RE knowledge in the current Year 7 intake, a number of pupils arrived at Hayes from primary schools with what seemed a relatively poor understanding of subject knowledge. In response, Mr Addison suggested he would be keen to explore ways of supporting the teaching of RE by making available the good resource of specialist knowledge there is in this school, such as offering RE training. It was also suggested that even if their school is an academy, and although they follow an alternative syllabus to Bromley's, they could possibly have input into the various aspects of the forthcoming syllabus re-write. The department is also very strong in knowledge of teaching and learning/pedagogy and could support schools where RE teaching is ranked satisfactory or good to raise standards.

Currently all students undertake a 3 year, long course RE, from Year 9 through to Year 11. We asked about current RE provision for years 12 and 13, and whilst there were occasional 'RE days', there was nothing specifically timetabled.

The SACRE team really valued the chance to visit the school and meet the staff, and we acknowledge that as an academy, there is a very real intention to link in with Bromley SACRE. Given the quality of the work we were able to observe the dedication of this specialist department, Bromley SACRE will benefit from their input and support.

Attached pages from Hayes school RE department scheme of work/handbook.

Foreword

The following schemes of work are a guide for all teachers of Religious Education to follow at Hayes School. They give a rough programme of study throughout key stages 3 and 4 to ensure that students study similar things with different teachers.

The scheme of work has been based on the requirements of the Bromley Agreed Syllabus, and meets the current legal requirements of the Standing Advisory Council for RE (SACRE).

The scheme of work suggests objectives, activities and homework's to go with the content students are required to study. Teachers are not required to use only to the suggested activities and should feel free to approach lesson content in their own ways. Where resources are available this is indicated; resources may be in the resources cupboard or on Q drive; in some instances they are available online.

Please note that there will be assessments sat periodically; although not always referred to in the scheme of work, they will be based on the content of specific units; teachers should aim to assess pupil progress formally at least once per half term either in an RE lesson or as part of whole school assessments. More detailed information on assessment can be found in the departments assessment policy.

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Outline RE Scheme of Work 2011/12

Years		Autumn		Spring	Summer	Faiths
7	1	Unit 1: Introducing RE (4 weeks)	Unit 2: World Religions	Unit 3: Questions about Jesus (Project)	Unit 5: Sikhism	ALL Christianity Sikhism Hinduism
	2	Unit 2: What is truth? (World Religions project)		Unit 4: Questions about Jesus (Project)	Unit 6: Hinduism	
8	1	Unit 7: Islam		Unit 9: Stories from the Old Testament	Unit 11: Buddhism: the path to enlightenment	Judaism Hinduism Christianity Islam Buddhism
	2	Unit 8: Christian Spirituality		Unit 10: Judaism	Unit 12: Movers and Shakers	
9	1	Unit 13: The fundamentals of Christianity/Islam (sacrificial religion)		Unit 1: Rights and Responsibilities	Unit 2: Peace and Conflict	Islam Christianity Links to others
	2	GCSE Religion and Society starts: Unit 1: Rights and Responsibilities		Unit 2: Peace and Conflict	Unit 3: Environment and Medical Issues	
10	1	Unit 3: Environment and Medical Issues		Mock Religion and Society Exam (with year 11 mocks) Catch up/revision	GCSE: Religion and Life Unit 1: Believing in God	Islam Christianity Links to others
		Unit 4: Crime and Punishment			Unit 2: Matters of Life and Death	
	2	Unit 4: Crime and Punishment		GCSE: Religion and Life Unit 1: Believing in God	Unit 2: Matters of Life and Death	
11	1	Unit 3: Marriage and the Family		Mock Exam Unit 4: Community Cohesion	Revision + Final exam (early May)	Islam Christianity Links to others
	2	Unit 3: Marriage and the Family		Revision and Exam Practice (both units R & S and R & L)	Revision for other subject/lessons of general interest.	

YEAR 7 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SCHEME OF WORK AUTUMN TERM
UNIT 2: INTRODUCTION TO FAITH
DURATION: 12 ONE HOUR LESSONS (FIRST AND SECOND HALF TERM)

Lesson	Topic	Objectives	Activities/Resources	Homework
1	Judaism	To know the origin and timescale of Judaism.	Sue Penny Judaism - Intro page (photocopy from book in resources cupboard). Get these facts on faith tables. Tell one story (eg Hanukah) to support homework on the faith.	Imagine you are Judah, write a letter explaining you have captured Jerusalem, tell him/her what you feel.
2	Christianity	To know the origins of Christianity and reflect on its influence on the world.	Sue Penney Christianity (copy from book in resources cupboard). Use the intro page for Symbols, timescales etc, get these facts onto the faith tables. What qualities should Christians have?	Design a 'Christians wanted' poster.
3	Islam	To know the origins of Islam and some of their important beliefs (eg. Five pillars?),	Sue Penney Islam: Origins timescales etc. Record this on their faith tables. (copy from book in resources cupboard). Introduce the five pillars - they could design their own five pillars	Complete the work started during the lesson.

Lesson	Topic	Objectives	Activities/Resources	Homework
4	Sikhism	To know the origins of Sikhism, reflecting on some of their most important beliefs (5Ks?)	Sue Penney - Sikhism: Origins, timescale etc. Record information of faith tables. Discuss the significance of the 5 Ks and the meaning of 'symbols'.	Design five symbols that explain your beliefs/lifestyle!
5	Hinduism	To know the origins of Hinduism (or rather not know?) and reflect some important Hindu stories.	Sue Penney - Hinduism: Origins, timescale (or lack of one) etc. Get this recorded on the faith table, perhaps tell one of the Hindu stories/re-incarnation and get them do to an activity based on this.	Lesson work to be completed.
6	Buddhism	To know the origins of Buddhism and reflect on how it differs to other faiths.	Sue Penney - Buddhism, Origins, timescales etc. Perhaps explore how it differs from other faiths or tell the story of Siddarta. Story of the lotus lower, sketch in books.	Research/Interview five people they know, finding out what they think about faith etc. Try to get a cross section of age groups.
7	Project Lesson 1	To prepare the students to undertake a project in one of the six main religions	Assorted text books, internet and books from the library, computer room. Divide the class into 6 groups - each group is to prepare a presentation on one of the 6 main religions to present to the class in 4 weeks time. Students could make	Project research/practice

Lesson	Topic	Objectives	Activities/Resources	Homework
			leaflets, powerpoints and posters. Explain the peer review criteria for a good project.	
Lesson 8 - 10	Project Lesson 2-4	To create a presentation to teach others in the class about your religion	Library, computer room(?). Internet, books. Teacher to ensure that students work at a good pace - this is plenty of time to prepare an practice a good presentation	Work on project
Lesson 11	Presentation Lesson	To evaluate each others presentations	Students are to peer mark each others presentations using the peer review sheet.	NO H/W
Lesson 12	Finishing off/feed back	Catch up and feedback of presentations	It's likely that there will still be presentations to finish. Spend time creating a 'class list' of what makes a good presentation - save it to refer to in the future.	Research one Parable and one Miracle of Jesus for the unit after Christmas

- **KEY LEARNING OUTCOME:** They should become familiar with symbols and know the basic facts about the origins and beliefs in each of the six faiths.
- Because of the pressure on text books it may be a good idea to vary the order in which we teach these faiths.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Sue Penney Textbook, Faith table (in addition resources folder), project peer review sheet in additional resources folder.