

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Minutes of the meeting held at 6.30 pm on 7 November 2012

Present:

Martin Sweet (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Anne Manning (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors: Reg Adams, Kate Lymer and Gordon Norrie.
Virginia Corbyn, Christopher Town and Rev Steve Varney.
Fiona Hawkes and Jackie Tranchina.
Samantha Barnett, Patricia Colling, Sanjay Gupta,
Ray Hagley, Saiyed Mahmood and Swarn Riat.

Also Present:

Ms Penny Smith-Orr, RE Adviser
Tessa Moore, Assistant Director, Education Services
Christine Reeks, Clerk to SACRE

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Martin Sweet be elected as Chairman and Mrs Anne Manning be elected as Vice-Chairman of SACRE for the 2012/2013 academic year.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stephen Carr, Councillor Roger Charsley, Councillor David Jefferys, Arlene Fane, Emma Honey and Sue Polydourou. Councillor Stephen Wells the Portfolio Holder for Education also submitted his apologies. Prior to the meeting Councillor Reg Adams and Mr Swarn Riat apologised for having to leave the meeting early due to other commitments.

It was reported that due to personal circumstances it had unfortunately been necessary for Christine Duncan to resign her membership of SACRE. The Chairman would write to her to thank her for her contribution to the work of SACRE.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

4 A) MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30TH MAY 2012

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 30th May 2012 be confirmed subject to the following amendments:

Minute 35: last paragraph, third line, amend, “the Sikh Temples at Woolwich and Gravesend on the last Sunday of the month” to read “the Sikh Temples at Woolwich and Gravesend any day and on the last Sunday of the month in Bromley”.

Minute 36: fourth paragraph, first line, “RE Quality mark” should read “RE Quality Mark”.

Appendix 1: The State of RE - second paragraph, fourth line, “no certainly” should read “no certainty”.

B) MATTERS ARISING:

Minute 26: (Meeting on 1st Feb 2012.) The Chairman had been in contact with Bob Stewart MP and invited him to attend the next SACRE meeting on 6th March 2013. However, he would unfortunately be unavailable on that date.

Minute 34c: Inter-faith Walks 14th and 15th July 2012 - Patricia Colling reported that this event had been very successful. The Bromley route had included visits to the Bromley Reform Synagogue, Bromley Parish Church, St Joseph’s RC Church and Bromley Baptist Church. The Chairman suggested that perhaps the route taken by the walk might be something schools could consider undertaking in future.

Minute 34d: The All Party Parliamentary Group for Religious Education was looking into teacher supply, local support and the impact on RE. The RE Adviser had been asked to send a questionnaire to primary and secondary school teachers (Heads of Departments) in Bromley to provide information for the All Party Parliamentary Group.

Minute 38: The Chairman suggested that perhaps a mini questionnaire could be sent to school governors as a way of obtaining feedback on the teaching of RE, particularly in regard to collective worship.

The Assistant Director for Education suggested that a way forward might be to contact Janet Heathcote, Governor Support Officer and ask that an LBB Education Department Circular be sent to the Chair of Governors for all schools (including academies) requesting the necessary information.

ACTION: RE Adviser to liaise with the SACRE Chairman and contact the Governor Support Officer.

5 ORAL UPDATE & PUBLICATIONS

a) London SACREs event - Annual meeting of the London and South East SACREs

The Chairman and Councillor Mrs Manning had attended the above event on 6th November 2012 at the National Zoroastrian Centre in Harrow, Middlesex.

The Chairman commented on the address by John Keast which included a report on the work of the RE Council. (A copy of the presentation was circulated at the meeting.) There had also been a presentation by Mary Myatt on the Religious Education Quality Mark.

Religious Education was not in a good state nationally and there were a lot of challenges. Local SACREs needed to be more pro-active. Suggested points for action in Bromley:

- (i) Invite more schools to 'present' about RE at SACRE meetings
- (ii) Try to capture what the learners feel about RE – pupil surveys?
- (iii) Engage more with academies.

The RE Adviser commented that pupils' opinions had been expressed in the survey sent to the Bromley Schools RE co-ordinators earlier in the year. She suggested that some of these opinions could be included in the SACRE Annual Report for 2011-2012. **(Action PSO)**

Notes of the annual London and South East SACREs meeting are attached to these minutes (Appendix 1). Also attached for information, NASACRE updates: June to October 2012 (Appendix 2).

b) Youth SACRE - update

The RE Adviser reported that there had not been a meeting of the Youth SACRE during the previous term but a meeting was planned for the 21st November 2012 at Coopers Technology College.

c) Islamic Competition

This would take place from 7 - 9pm on 15th November 2012 at Darul Uloom. Mr Mahmood informed the meeting that four schools were participating; Bullers Wood, Bishop Justus, Langley Park School for Boys and Coopers Technology College. All SACRE members were welcome and were asked to arrive by 6.50pm. A modest dress code was required; ladies should wear a long loose dress/skirt and a headscarf. SACRE Members were asked to notify Mr Mahmood if they wished to attend. The SACRE clerk would circulate further details by email. **(Action CR)**

The Chairman remarked that arrangements had been made for students from Darul Uloom to visit St. Nicholas Primary School in Chislehurst on 14th November 2012. Mr Mahmood commented on the keen interest which was always shown by the SACRE Chairman and stated that Mr Sweet was a great

asset to the Council. Mr Mahmood asked for his comments to be formally recorded in the minutes.

(Councillor Adams, Mr Riat and Rev Varney left the meeting after consideration of this item.)

d) SACRE Annual Report for 2011 - 2012

The RE Adviser was preparing the annual SACRE report for 2011 - 2012 and would incorporate pupil comments (see item 5a above). The report would be checked by the Chairman before being sent to NASACRE and the Department for Education in December 2012. The report would also be distributed to all Bromley schools, SACRE Members, the Portfolio Holder for Education and members of the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee. The Chairman suggested, and SACRE members agreed that a copy of the annual report should be sent to Michael Gove MP and Liz Truss MP with a covering letter. It was further agreed that a copy of the report should be sent to the local Members of Parliament drawing their attention to the fact that the report had been sent to the above named MPs.

e) National RE Update

National RE Review: The RE Adviser reported that earlier that day she had attended a meeting of the RE Council, as a member of the Association of Religious Education Inspectors Advisors and Consultants (AREIAC). She had been given a copy of a report on Phase 1 of the National RE Review which had been release from embargo that afternoon. (The review was to run alongside the review of the National Curriculum.) The report had been prepared by a Panel of four experts who had interviewed 50 people; teachers, pupils, advisors and inspectors. From 12th November until 3rd December 2012 there was going to be a public consultation on the document. The RE Adviser would forward the report and questionnaire to SACRE Members and encouraged them to respond. **(Action PSO)**

RE Quality Mark: This had been discussed at the RE Co-ordinators meeting. Details of the Quality Mark can be seen on the following website: www.reqm.org (see also Appendix 1). The RE Adviser would be happy to assist schools who wished to pursue this.

RE Council – Sponsored Walk: In order to help support the costs of the RE Review the RE Council would be having a sponsored walk in May 2013. This would also coincide with the 40th Anniversary of the RE Council. Further details would be circulated when available.

Inter Faith Week: This would take place from 18th – 27th November 2012. Resources can be found on www.interfaithweek.org Patricia Colling (the Catholic representative on SACRE) said that she had been asked to produce something on “what you see when you go into church” and understood that other religious groups had been asked to do something similar. The RE Adviser said that she was not aware of this but it might be something which

could be a useful resource for schools. Mrs Colling said that she would make some more enquiries about the project. **(Action PC)**

(Mr Town left the meeting after consideration of this item.)

6 DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE
Report no. ED12053

The Chairman and RE Adviser met with the Head of Commissioning and Business Services in January 2012 and agreed a costed development plan which was presented to SACRE at their Spring meeting. The development plan was for four terms in order to move it in line with the Council's financial year.

SACRE Members considered a report prepared by the RE Adviser which updated them on the progress of the development plan. Following discussion the following points and amendments were made:

Item 2: Make a Faith Directory for Schools. "...a few speakers who have volunteered and been checked" should read "a few appropriate speakers who have volunteered and been trained." It was agreed that the RE Adviser should try and arrange another training event for volunteers from faith groups who had offered to talk in schools. (Unfortunately it had been necessary to postpone the training event which had previously been organised, as little interest had been shown.) The training event would be held in the evening and as much notice as possible would be given of the date. The RE Adviser would contact the SACRE clerk to make the necessary arrangements. **(Action PSO and CR)**. It was important that the training session should be evaluated and participants would be asked to complete an evaluation form.

Item 12: "Moral, Social and Cultural" should read "Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural"

Item 13: Ensure schools are aware of the statutory nature of RE – this should be reworded to read **all** schools

RESOLVED that

- (i) the updating report and amendments be noted;**
- (ii) the RE Adviser to organise a training session for the Faith Directory volunteers.**

(Mr Hagley left the meeting after consideration of this item.)

**7 AGREED SYLLABUS UPDATE
 Report no. ED12054**

Agreed Syllabuses have to be reviewed by SACRE every 5 years and are usually revised and updated every 10 years. The current Bromley Syllabus was written in 2006 and was due for review. The current scheme of work for schools was written in 1995 and updated in 2004. As a result of discussion regarding the current documentation of the Bromley Agreed Syllabus, it was decided to revise the syllabus and rewrite the scheme of work to bring them in line with current thinking on RE teaching.

The RE Adviser submitted a report which outlined the progress to date. Copies of completed draft units which had been prepared were circulated at the meeting. These related to Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam Judaism and Sikhism. Following discussion it was agreed that more time should be allowed for individual faith representatives on SACRE to consider and comment on the units. The RE Adviser agreed to email the relevant units to the SACRE members concerned for their consideration. The Chairman suggested that in addition to detailed faith comments, feedback should be given on a general impression/overview.

A grid of the proposed timetable for teaching the units, divided by term and into year groups was also circulated. Virginia Corbyn commented that it needed to be clear which were statutory and non-statutory units. Some concern was expressed at the meeting that not enough time was being allocated to the teaching of Christianity. Fiona Hawkes remarked that the Unit on "Should we care for our world" would also cover Christianity. Christmas and Easter were also included in the timetable. Councillor Norrie considered that the proposed timetable was too heavily biased against the Christian religion. The RE Adviser commented that in Bromley more and more children were not of the Christian faith or had no faith. The current syllabus did not reflect this and was out of date. The Chairman said he understood Councillor Norrie's concerns but the teachers involved had endorsed the suggested units and timetable. Mr Mahmood considered that a good positive start had been made but agreed that SACRE Members needed to look at the units for their individual faith groups. The RE Adviser emphasised that the units which had been prepared were not final and were still in draft form.

In order to progress the matter it was suggested and agreed by SACRE Members that the Agreed Syllabus Update should be given priority discussion at their next meeting which should start at the earlier time of 6pm. The revised materials should be made available in advance of the meeting. It was noted that the new Agreed Syllabus would need to be ready before the end of the summer term 2013 for implementation in September 2013.

RESOLVED that individual faith groups on SACRE should be sent copies of the appropriate draft units of work for comments and the RE Adviser should continue working on the Agreed Syllabus update.

(Councillor Lymer and Councillor Manning left the meeting during consideration of this item and Mr Gupta left the meeting at the end of the item)

**8 SCHOOL VISITS
Report no. ED12055**

It had been agreed that the RE Adviser should be released from organising and making school visits during the year in order to use the time to work on the Bromley RE Syllabus revision.

The Chairman informed the meeting that arrangements had been made for the following visits to take place:

Castlecombe Primary School - 21st November 2012 at 10.25am.

Hayes Secondary School – 3rd December 2012 (time to be confirmed).

The SACRE clerk would circulate details to SACRE members who were asked to notify the Chairman if they would be able to accompany him on the school visits.

RESOLVED that details of the proposed school visits be circulated and SACRE Members notify the Chairman if they would be able to attend.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

10 DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday 6th March 2013 – meeting to start at **6pm**.

Wednesday 5th June 2013 – meeting to start at 6.30pm.

The Meeting ended at 8.52 pm

Chairman