

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

**Date:** June 5<sup>th</sup> 2013

**Decision Type:** Information

**Title:** Bromley SACRE visit to Marian Vian Primary School, Beckenham Friday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2013

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**Chief Officer:** Terry Parkin, Executive Director: Education, Care and Health Services

**Ward:** N/A

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1. Reason for report

SACRE members visit local schools in order to observe the teaching of RE and to offer support to the RE Coordinator of the school. This is the report of the school visit to Marian Vian School in January 2013.

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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**Members are asked to note the report and comment on the following key issues identified:**

- The attached scheme of work (appendix 1) which is derived from the current Bromley scheme, illustrates the current mix of faiths and topics that are undertaken at Marian Vian school. It is important that the content, the structure and the time allocation of topics are considered. During the visit, one pupil commented that "RE should look more at the life of other faith groups.
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During the visit:

- It was encouraging that there was clear evidence of RE across the school through displays in class and corridors. SACRE needs to consider how more schools can be encouraged to show evidence of RE as they are expected to show evidence of other subjects in this way.
- We should note the school's views regarding:
  - i. opportunities to learn more about other 'things', such as Islam and prayer.
  - ii. opportunities to engage in story work in RE.
  - iii. opportunities to explore the lives of real people, such as Mother Theresa.

One member of staff felt that RE would be better if it were organised into half term blocks rather than covering a topic for a whole term.

### **3. COMMENTARY**

**SACRE Team:** Mr Christopher Town, Councillor.Reg Adams and Mr Martin Sweet

#### **Introduction:**

Marian Vian Primary School is a three form entry Community School in Beckenham. During our 2½ hour visit, we were able to observe a Year 5 class assembly and a Year 1 RE lesson. We were also able to discuss aspects of RE with the head teacher, Mr Ian Redgrave and the subject coordinator, Ms Alison Smith plus have a tour of the school to look at their RE display boards.

#### **Collective worship/assembly**

We were invited to observe a Year 5 class assembly. The teacher, Mrs Jones, and her class gave us a fantastic assembly about Henry VIII<sup>th</sup> and his six wives. They used the idea of having the six 'wives' with children holding empty picture frames in front. The children followed the scripts perfectly and clearly. The whole class took part, and those with lead roles were confident and reassured. The 'story' had clear historical content, accurate and informative to all those present. Mrs Jones had covered the topic well and the children obviously understood the content and context of their presentation.

It was a perfect example of how to produce and present a class assembly. Several parents were also present and obviously enjoyed the whole occasion. The assembly also included singing to a soundtrack. The rest of the children attending listened appreciatively, and we got the clear impression that this was typical and expected behaviour for their school assemblies.

It is clearly not possible for a school of this size to attend assemblies together and this class were due to present their assembly to the rest of the school later

that afternoon, following their usual pattern: years 1, 3 and 5 in the morning and years 2, 4 and 6 in the afternoon.

Those parents that were able to attend were appreciative of both the performance and the 'buzz' it gave their children to undertake it so competently.

### **Tour of school with pupils from the School Council**

We were treated to a tour of the school by representatives of the School Council. It was good to get a flavour of the school and also to enjoy the enthusiasm of our pupil 'guides'. They were really enthusiastic and proud of their school and of the work on display.

### **RE display boards**

It was especially encouraging to note the RE work displayed around the school and in classrooms. We saw an excellent display boards on the theme of Judaism by Year 5 and a Year 6 display on Hinduism.

There was an impressive display in a corridor on the topic of homelessness which included work produced by the children in response to input and presentation by a group called 'Street Souls' (see RE scheme of work). Street Souls not only presented information about homelessness but got the children involved in fundraising, encouraging them to support other charities and to gain an awareness of this important aspect of society.

We also saw a lovely display board by Year 3 pupils on the theme of Festivals of Light (see RE scheme of work) but perhaps the most significant aspect of this was that the children showing us around pointed out both their work and that of others. They were clearly proud of this work and enthusiastic about the topics covered in RE.

### **Discussion with school pupils**

We then spent a very happy half hour talking with pupils from Years 1-6 on the School Council about RE and collective worship.

When quizzed about 'assemblies', they felt they wanted them to be more interesting and more interactive. They all (including Year 6) said they liked singing in assembly, especially the action songs. But overall, they were keen to 'keep assemblies' since they felt it covered additional ideas to the usual topics in the curriculum.

As far as RE is concerned, they enjoyed the fact that they learnt about other 'things', such as Islam and prayer, and it usually involved activities other than 'just writing'. The younger pupils said they enjoyed the topic which included Buddhist stories and they especially remembered the story of the Monkey King. Older ones mentioned specifically they enjoyed the assemblies about Mother Theresa (linked again with the theme of homelessness)

Their advice to us on the content of RE was that they should look more at the life of other faith groups.

**RE lessons:**

After talking with staff during break time, we spent an enjoyable 45 minutes with Year 1. The teacher, Mrs Alison Harris, also the subject coordinator, taught a lesson with the learning objective 'to recognise the importance for Christians' of Jesus' baptism..

The lesson started with a question/answer time on the carpet, encouraging the children to listen as well as contribute. They got involved quickly and enthusiastically, using their own experience of baptism and christening.

The teacher then read from two versions of children's Bibles ( Lion's Children's Illustrated Bible and The Toddler's Bible), using the interactive whiteboard to lead discussion.

The children's activity was to draw a picture of Jesus being baptised and the dove arriving (using ideas from pictures projected on the white board) and also to write a sentence about their picture.

During the lesson we were able to look through RE work books, noting the quality and quantity of the RE work the children had recorded. Whilst there was a range in ability and in the level of responses, it was encouraging that most children had some good, relevant record of what they had been studying in RE.

**Discussions with staff:**

RE is taught by teachers and not by teaching assistants and they make good use of their significant collection of artefacts and resources.

The school undertakes RE visits to places of worship, notably Bromley Reformed Synagogue (Year 3) and St. James's Church (Year 4). The school also visits St. James at various times of the year.

Appendix One Marian Vian Primary school RE: following Bromley Scheme of Work

YR	Autumn			Spring		Summer		
R	See Foundation Stage Plans							
1	Sukkot	Special Times Festivals of Light Divali, Hanukkah & Christingles	Symbol of Light	Special People Jesus		Easter	Special Leaders	Special Places Church visit
2	Harvest Gifts	Special Books Multi-Faith	Wise Men and Gifts	Special Stories Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam		Easter Fasting & Feasting	Purim	Growing up and moving on
3	Harvest Multi- Cultural	Festivals of Light Divali & Hanukkah Hinduism & Judaism	Christmas Light	The Bible Christianity	Jesus the Teacher Christianity	Palm Sunday	Followers of Jesus Then and now Christianity	
4	Harvest Caring for Nature	Religious Symbolism Multi-Faith	Christmas symbols	Islam Beliefs & practices		Easter Good Friday & Easter Sunday	Churches Christianity	
5	Sukkot Judaism	Ten Commandments Judaism	Christmas Homeless ness	Passover Judaism		Easter The Last Supper	The Torah Judaism	Synagogue Judaism
6	Harvest Famine	Missionaries Christianity	Christmas Journeys	Hinduism Beliefs & practices		Easter Jerusalem	Pilgrimage Christianity, Judaism, Islam & Hinduism	