

## **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Minutes of the meeting held at 6.30 pm on 6 November 2013

### **Present:**

Councillor Mrs Anne Manning (Vice-Chairman)  
Rev Roger Bristow (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillors Reg Adams, Kate Lymer and Gordon Norrie.  
Virginia Corbyn, Christopher Town and Rev Steve Varney.  
Arlene Fane, Ray Hagley, Saiyed Mahmood,  
Sue Polydorou, Swarn Riat, and Edlene Whitman.

### **Also Present:**

Ms Penny Smith-Orr, RE Adviser  
Jane Bailey, Interim Assistant Director for Education and  
Care Services  
Councillor Stephen Wells, Portfolio Holder for Education  
(until 7.10pm)  
Rachel Archer, Teacher and RE Co-ordinator, Valley  
Primary School  
Christine Reeks, Clerk to SACRE

## **1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs Manning be elected as Chairman and Rev Roger Bristow be elected as Vice-Chairman of SACRE for the 2013/14 academic year.**

(It was noted that Councillor Manning would not be standing for re-election at the Local Elections to be held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014.)

## **2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stephen Carr, Councillor Roger Charsley, Councillor David Jefferys, Samantha Barnett, Patricia Colling, Fiona Hawkes Jed Stone and Jackie Tranchina.

Councillor Adams, Mr Mahmood and Mr Riat apologised for having to leave the meeting early as they needed to attend other meetings. The Chairman welcomed Edlene Whitman who had been appointed as the new Free Church Representative, and Rachel Archer from Valley Primary School. The Chairman also welcomed Councillor Wells and Jane Bailey, Interim Assistant Director for Education and Care Services, and Members of SACRE were introduced.

**3            DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**4            A) MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5TH JUNE 2013**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2013 be confirmed.

**B) MATTERS ARISING:**

Minute 4c: The RE Adviser commented that the photographs taken at the training session for Faith Directory volunteers had not been included in the summer edition of the Council's in house newsletter "In Touch".

**5            ORAL UPDATE & PUBLICATIONS**

**a)           Youth SACRE**

The RE Adviser reported that unfortunately the teacher involved with the Youth SACRE had been unwell and it had not been possible to arrange a meeting of the Youth SACRE during the Autumn term. It was hoped that the virtual film of St Nicholas' Church made by the Youth SACRE could be shown to SACRE Members at their next meeting.

**b)           Launch of RE Review**

The RE Review report on Religious Education in England was published by the Religious Education Council of England and Wales in October 2013, following eighteen months of development work and consultation.

The full report includes the curriculum framework, a discussion of the wider context for RE and a series of questions to inform future work and development, as well as the recommendations of the Expert Panel report. The Review can be accessed on the following link:

<http://resubjectreview.recouncil.org.uk/re-review-report>

Mr Mahmood asked if the report had any impact on the new Bromley Agreed Syllabus for RE. He was informed by the RE Adviser that there were no clashes, and reference had been made in the Bromley Syllabus to the aims of RE outlined in the Review. In answer to a question from the Assistant Director for Education and Care Services, the RE Adviser said that she had been with the designer earlier that day putting together the final touches to the new Bromley RE Syllabus which was being produced on a CD. This would shortly be emailed to the Director for Education and Care Services for him to endorse.

**c) London SACRE meeting**

The RE Adviser informed SACRE Members that the London SACRE meeting usually took place once a year. A meeting was due to have been held on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2013, but had been cancelled; a meeting might be arranged during the spring of 2014.

**d) SACRE Annual Report 2012-2013**

The RE Adviser would obtain details of the RE examination results and incorporate these in the SACRE Annual Report for 2012 – 2013, which would be completed by the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013. *(This would be distributed to SACRE Members, the Director and Assistant Director of Education, the Education Portfolio Holder, Members of the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee, libraries, schools and NASACRE.)* The Department of Education did not wish to receive these statutory reports but a copy of the previous years report had been sent to the Secretary of State for Education. It was suggested that perhaps the 2012-2013 report should also be sent to him with a covering letter. The Chairman said she would review the reply which had been received from Michael Gove MP and would consider the matter further.

**e) Islamic Competition**

The prize giving for the Islamic Competition would take place at Darul Uloom from 6.30pm to 9pm on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013. Mr Mahmood outlined the programme for the evening and showed SACRE Members examples of some of the work which had been submitted. The Competition was for Key Stage 3 pupils and the following five schools had taken part: Bullers Wood, Langley Park Boys, Coopers Technology College, Harris Academy (Bromley), and Farringtons Independent School. All SACRE Members were invited to the prize giving and were asked to inform Mr Mahmood if they wished to attend. *(Details had previously been circulated to SACRE Members).*

**6 NEW AGREED SYLLABUS 2013**  
*Briefing Item ED13110*

SACRE Members received a report which updated them on the progress of the Bromley New RE Agreed Syllabus 2013.

The New Agreed Syllabus was sanctioned by the SACRE committee at their meeting in May 2013. Unfortunately the process was held up due to a change in the agreement to fund the design and production of a CD but this was resolved in September 2013.

The RE Consultant and a designer had worked together and the New Syllabus was being made into a CD to be given to all Bromley schools. This would be launched at an event at the Civic Centre in Bromley on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2013, to which all members of the SACRE committee were invited,

as well as representatives from all the schools and Academies in Bromley. The Mayor of Bromley would be attending the event and the recently retired Chairman of SACRE would be speaking on “The Importance of RE in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”.

The law states that Academies are able to choose which agreed syllabus to use while maintained schools must use the locally agreed syllabus. It is hoped that the Academies in Bromley will choose to use the new Bromley agreed syllabus which teaches all the main religions and also has a thematic unit for each year group. Also included are a number of explanatory pages, a section on assessment, a section on the Early Years Foundation stage and a number of pages of resources and suitable websites for teachers to use.

Rachel Archer, Teacher and RE Co-ordinator from Valley Primary School commented that her school was part of a cluster of seven primary Academies which had agreed to adopt the New RE Syllabus.

Mr Mahmood asked if a copy of the CD could be given to Darul Uloom and also suggested that it could be sent to independent schools in Bromley. Following discussion, SACRE Members agreed to recommend that the New Agreed Syllabus should be put on the Bromley Council website.

**RESOLVED that**

**(i) progress of the New RE Agreed Syllabus and arrangements for the Syllabus Launch be noted, and**

**(ii) arrangements be made for the New RE Agreed Syllabus to be put on the Bromley Council website following the Syllabus Launch.**

*(Councillor Adams, Mr Mahmood and Mr Riat left the meeting after consideration of this item)*

**7 SACRE SUPPORT FROM LB BROMLEY AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENT**  
*Briefing Item ED1311*

The Chairman circulated for information, a copy of a BBC article which reported on comments made by the Education Secretary Michael Gove in July 2013, when he remarked that Religious Education had “suffered” in England’s schools amid government changes.

SACRE Members considered a report which presented a draft Development Plan prepared by the RE Adviser for the next financial year. The recently appointed Interim Assistant Director for Education and Care Services advised that the SACRE budget for the current year was £11,375, but due to the necessity for local authority financial cut backs this was to be reduced to £7,000 for the next financial year. This would in turn necessitate a reduction in

the number of days support from the RE Consultant/RE Adviser who's contract finished at the end of the current financial year. The Assistant Director advised that competitive tendering for the position would need to be carried out and expressions of interest would be invited. She advised SACRE Members to give further consideration as to how SACRE can continue to fulfil its role within the limited funds available, and suggested that SACRE review the best use of the reduced number of Consultant days which would be available. In answer to a question from Rev Varney, the Assistant Director confirmed that the SACRE Chairman would be contacted regarding the tendering process and the requirements and qualities necessary for the RE Consultant and their role with SACRE.

The Chairman stated that she understood the necessity for financial cut backs, but emphasised that the Local Authority had a statutory responsibility to establish a SACRE to ensure high quality RE and collective worship for all pupils, and to monitor and improve learning and achievement in Bromley schools. This included the specialist RE advice and clerking support for SACRE. In addition, the Local Authority had a statutory duty to ensure that the agreed RE syllabus was reviewed every five years.

Members of SACRE discussed the budget and arrangements for Bromley SACRE in the next financial year. Points raised included the following:

The RE Adviser queried whether the cost of the RE co-ordinators' meetings was appropriated to her contract as she submitted separate invoices and she believed that these meetings had separate funding. The Assistant Director said that she would need to check this. The RE Adviser remarked that Teachers would need to be supported in the implementation of the new RE Syllabus and the Assistant Director said she would contact the Workforce Development Team regarding the possibility of a course being run to support this. The SACRE Clerk asked if a recharge was made for her services and would make enquiries to see if this was the case.

The Chairman suggested that the Development Plan should have more specific details of costs and that a budget monitoring report should be submitted to each SACRE meeting. The Assistant Director agreed to speak to the finance officer regarding the possibility of such a report being prepared.

Rev Varney expressed the view that it would be difficult to cut back on the Development Plan and considered that SACRE needed to be sufficiently resourced. He stated that the work of SACRE needed to be made better known, that there should be a clear statement of its aims, and that its aspirations should not be curtailed. He commented that the role and purpose of SACRE far exceeded the RE Adviser's preparation for and attendance at SACRE meetings and the preparation of the Annual SACRE Report. It was important that SACRE continued to monitor RE and collective worship in schools and Rev Varney suggested that perhaps in future SACRE Members could carry out school visits and produce the necessary reports in order to save the RE Consultant's time.

Sue Polydorou considered that having regard to the budget cuts which needed to be made by the Local Authority, SACRE Members needed to be realistic. She suggested that a distinction needed to be made between essential and non-essential activities in the Development Plan which needed to be carried out in order for SACRE to fulfil its role.

Rev Bristow suggested that perhaps the way forward would be for SACRE to meet as a smaller group to discuss the Development Plan in detail. It was agreed that this was a good idea and the following offered to meet with the SACRE Chairman and RE Adviser: Rev Bristow, Rev Varney, Virginia Corbyn and Rachel Archer. The RE Adviser would liaise with the SACRE Clerk, and those who had offered to help would be emailed with suggested meeting dates.

**RESOLVED that**

- (i) the report and comments above be noted, and**
- (ii) the SACRE Development Plan be reviewed in accordance with the arrangements outlined above.**

*(Rev Bristow left the meeting after consideration of this item.)*

**8 SCHOOL VISITS**  
*Briefing Item ED13112*

*(This item was considered at the beginning of the meeting)*

SACRE members visit local schools in order to observe the teaching of RE and to offer support to the RE Co-ordinator of the school.

The RE Adviser informed SACRE members that it had been necessary to rearrange the visit to Darrick Wood Secondary School which had been planned for 16<sup>th</sup> September 2013. This would now take place at 8.20am on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2013. It had also been necessary to rearrange the visit to Valley Primary School and this would take place at 1pm on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2013.

Councillor Manning confirmed she would be able to accompany the RE Adviser on the visit to Darrick Wood School. Edlene Whitman and Christopher Town would be able to accompany her on the visit to Valley Primary School and Rev Roger Bristow would attend if possible. Reports on the visits would be considered at the next SACRE meeting.

**RESOLVED that arrangements for the school visits be noted.**

**9 FORWARD ROLLING WORK PROGRAMME**

*Briefing item ED13113*

A rolling programme of the work of SACRE was considered. The purpose of this was to ensure that certain aspects of the business of SACRE were addressed regularly during the year.

Councillor Manning suggested that at the next meeting consideration could be given to an item on how SACRE could work better with schools and promote the work of SACRE to them. Arlene Fane suggested that perhaps something could be planned around National RE Celebration Day when representatives from different schools could be involved. Rachel Archer from Valley Primary School (*now an Academy*) suggested that perhaps something could be arranged to link in with World Religion Day in 2015. She thought this might be something which would encourage Academies to participate.

**RESOLVED that the SACRE work programme for the current academic year 2013/14 be agreed.**

**10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

**11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that it had been necessary to change the date of the next meeting from Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March to Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2014, (meeting to start at 6.30pm).

The Meeting ended at 8.10 pm

Chairman