

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Minutes of the meeting held at 6.30pm on 1 July 2014

Present:

Reverend Roger Bristow (Chairman)
Councillors: Kevin Brooks and Stephen Wells
(both present until 7pm)
Virginia Corbyn and Rev Steve Varney
Samantha Barnett, Sanjay Gupta, Saiyed Mahmood and
Swarn Riat

Also Present:

Penny Smith-Orr, RE Adviser
Christine Reeks, Clerk to SACRE

In Attendance:

Jane Winter, Chairman of the Priory Academy Trust
(observing the meeting)

22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor David Jefferys, Councillor Sarah Phillips, Councillor Keith Onslow, Christopher Town, Arlene Fane, Fiona Hawkes, Edlene Whitman and Sue Polydorou. It was noted that Arlene Fane had now retired and Fiona Hawkes had moved to a school outside of the Borough. These two teacher representatives would not be continuing as member of SACRE in the new academic year.

Nina Newell, Head of Schools and Early Years Commissioning and Quality Assurance had also submitted her apologies. The Chairman explained that Mrs Newell had attended a pre-agenda meeting with himself, the RE Adviser and the Clerk to SACRE. It had been agreed that in future Mrs Newell would attend SACRE pre-meetings, and would attend the main SACRE meeting if her contribution to the items being discussed was required.

Councillors Kevin Brooks and Stephen Wells apologised for having to leave the meeting early as they needed to attend other meetings. The Chairman welcomed the newly appointed Councillor Members to SACRE, and also welcomed Jane Winter, Chairman of the Priory Academy Trust who was observing the meeting.

(NB. As there were no teacher representatives present at the meeting and the Councillor representatives left at 7pm, the meeting was not quorate. The meeting took place but no formal decisions were made.)

23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

24 A) MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12TH MARCH 2014

The minutes of the meeting on 12th March 2014 were received and would be formally confirmed at the next meeting.

B) MATTERS ARISING:

Minute 15(c): SACRE Annual Report 2012-2013

In answer to a question from Councillor Wells, the RE Adviser confirmed that there had been no double counting in the statistics relating to the RE examinations.

Minute 15(d): Agreed Syllabus

It was confirmed that a CD of the new RE syllabus had been sent to the independent schools in Bromley. The Chairman said that it was hoped a link to the Agreed Syllabus could be provided on "Fronter" used by schools. The RE Adviser would be reviewing Fronter to ensure it was up to date.

Minute 15(f): Islamic Competition

In answer to a question from Councillor Wells, Mr Mahmood confirmed that it was planned the Islamic Competition for 2014 would still take place. *(To be held on 13th November 2014.)*

Minute 16: SACRE Development Plan and Budget

Penny Smith-Orr had been successful in her bid for the position of Bromley's RE Consultant for 2014/15. She thanked SACRE Members for the congratulations and good wishes which she had received.

Minute 17: Responsibilities for RE

It was confirmed that the guidance produced by the RE Council on the Provision and Training of RE Teachers had been circulated to the Chairs and Clerks of Governors of Primary and Secondary Schools in Bromley.

25 ORAL UPDATE AND PUBLICATIONS

a) Chairs of Governors Network Forum

The Chairman informed the meeting that he had recently given presentations to the Chairs of Governors Network Forum and also to the Bromley Deanery Synod. He had spoken on the importance of RE and the role of SACRE and referred to reports published by the RE Council, Ofsted, the All Party Parliamentary Group and SACRE. There was a lot of interest from both bodies and their response was very positive. The Chairs of Governors had asked what they could do to help and the Chairman said that they should encourage their governing bodies to ask if RE was being taken seriously in

their schools. The RE Adviser suggested that she could write something for the Governors Newsletter listing what they could do to encourage RE in schools. The Chairman thought that this would be a good idea and would ask for the article to be included in the Newsletter.

b) Church Schools Festival

The RE Adviser reported on this joyful and very successful event which had taken place at Bromley Parish Church the previous week. The festival was attended by Bromley Church of England primary schools and three non-church schools which are affiliated in a cluster. The event had been highly organised and the children were allowed to participate in three out of the thirteen workshops available. The activities included drumming, dance, drama, prayer, brass rubbing, and biscuit making. The festival ended with a Service at the end of the day.

The event had also been attended by Virginia Corbyn, Christopher Town and the Rev Steve Varney. Virginia Corbyn remarked on the considerable amount of work undertaken to organise the event and commented in particular on the contribution made by the incumbent of Bromley Parish Church.

The Chairman explained that the Church Schools Festival was an annual event which usually took place at Rochester Cathedral, however it had not been possible for it to be held there this year.

Mr Riat stressed the importance of also celebrating other faiths and suggested having multi-faith days in schools. The RE Adviser said that there are National RE Celebration events and some schools have RE Celebration week. Bromley's new RE syllabus encouraged the celebration of festivals from different faiths.

It was noted that this had been an event intended primarily for (and organised locally by) the CofE schools. By its very nature it was a specifically Christian event. There was no reason that other schools could not, between them or individually, organise a similar multi-faith event if they wished to do so.

(Councillor Brooks and Wells left the meeting after consideration of this item.)

26 SACRE TRAINING (DISCUSSION OF A "GOOD" RE LESSON)
Item ED15078

This training session was deferred as there were no Councillor Members or teachers in attendance at the meeting.

27 NASACRE AGM
Item ED 15059

This was held in London on 22nd May 2014, and was attended by the Chairman, the RE Adviser and Mr Mahmood.

The key note speaker was Stephen Lloyd MP, convenor of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on RE. He spoke on the importance of religious education in all schools and talked about the two reports produced by the APPG. The speech was well received and a question and answer session focussed on the needs of SACREs and how they can be as productive as possible. The Chairman informed SACRE Members that Mr Lloyd had suggested they should lobby their MPs to “keep RE on the agenda” and to challenge any changes which might jeopardise RE.

Thoughts on the RE Review from John Keast (Chairman of the RE Council) were also passed on at the AGM, together with reports from the officers of NASACRE and their plans for the coming year.

The RE Adviser said that at the AGM eight different SACRE’s had given presentations on projects they had undertaken. These would shortly be available for SACRE Members to view on the NASACRE website. Mr Mahmood had given a presentation on the Islamic competition in Bromley which was well received and engendered many questions.

Mr Mahmood shared his presentation with those in attendance at the SACRE meeting.

The purpose of the Islamic Competition was to encourage an accurate knowledge and understanding of Islam, and the title of the project set was “The True meaning of Islam”. Pupils were asked to explain what they considered to be the essential teachings of Islam, to discuss their implications for important issues of today and to finish with a statement about what they had gained from their work.

A summary of the projects had been detailed in the report considered by SACRE at their previous meeting, and Mr Mahmood’s presentation showed examples of the work submitted by the Year 7 and 8 children from the five schools that had participated in the event. He commented on the impressive variety of work undertaken by the students.

Mr Mahmood also described in detail and showed photographs of the prize giving event which had taken place at Darul Uloom. The event was attended by parents, students and their teachers and had been very encompassing.

Mr Mahmood said that the competition would not have been possible without the exceptional help and encouragement from the teachers concerned. Mr Gupta thanked Mr Mahmood for providing the platform for this excellent event to take place. He remarked that the event enabled young students to share their knowledge with adults.

The RE Adviser said that the Islamic Competition was much appreciated and valued and helped to build up good relationships. The Chairman thanked Mr Mahmood for his excellent presentation.

(The next prize giving event for the 2014 Islamic Competition would be held at Darul Uloom on 13th November 2014. An invitation to attend the event would be sent to SACRE Members in due course.)

28 SCHOOL VISITS - GUIDELINES ***Item ED15080***

It had been suggested by the SACRE Working Party (which met in December 2013 to consider the Development Plan) that it would be helpful for SACRE Members to have a tick list/sheet for making comments when visiting schools. Arising from this the RE Adviser had prepared suggested draft guidelines for consideration which were discussed by SACRE Members at their previous meeting.

In the light of these discussions the RE Adviser had amended the guidelines and these were submitted to SACRE Members for consideration and discussion.

It was emphasised that the guidelines are not inspection forms and were not to be taken into the classroom. They are to be used as an aide memoir and for comments to be recorded by SACRE Members after the school visit. The forms are then passed to the RE Adviser to help her with the preparation of her report for SACRE.

Members present felt that the suggested guidelines were helpful but suggested that the following further amendments be made:

A heading to be put on the forms saying "Not to be taken into the classroom".

Re: Commentary on an RE lesson

(AT1) to be inserted after "using religious vocabulary properly"

(AT2) to be inserted after "given time to reflect on what they have learnt"

(AT1- Refers to Attainment Target 1 - "Learning about Religion".)

(AT2- Refers to Attainment Target 2 - "Learning from Religion.")

An additional section to be put at the end of the form for "Any Other Comments".

The RE Adviser agreed to amend the forms accordingly and to present them to the next SACRE meeting for approval.

The Chairman emphasised that the purpose of the visits was to support and encourage good collective worship and religious education in Bromley Schools.

29 **SCHOOL VISITS**
Item ED15081

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.

On 12th March 2014 the Chairman and RE Adviser visited Cudham C of E Primary School. On 19th May 2014 they visited Clare House Primary School with Mr Mahmood, and on 4th June 2014, the RE Adviser, Samantha Barnett, Rev Steve Varney and Edlene Whitman visited Keston C of E Primary School.

Reports on the school visits were considered by SACRE Members. The RE Adviser commented on the visits which had taken place, all three of which had been very positive. Rev Varney commented in particular on the excellent Service which had taken place at Keston School.

The RE Adviser informed SACRE Members that she would make arrangements for school visits to take place in the autumn term and would email them details in due course to see if they would be available to accompany her on the visits.

30 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Virginia Corbyn (*Assistant Director to Education (Schools) at the Diocese of Rochester*) informed SACRE Members that she and the RE Adviser were working together to try and improve RE training opportunities for schools. They were pooling their resources and arranging joint training meetings for teachers. The project was to be known as "RE Connect". Virginia Corbyn would be teaching on Christianity and the RE Adviser would be leading on other faiths.

The RE Adviser emphasised that this project was not part of her contracted work for SACRE and was being undertaken as part of her work for Network Training.

31 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was due to be held on 8th October 2014, however the Chairman and RE Adviser felt that this would be too early in the autumn term. The matter would be discussed outside of the meeting and SACRE Members would be notified of the revised date.

The Meeting ended at 8.05 pm

Chairman