

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Minutes of the meeting held at 6.30 pm on 2 December 2014

Present:

Reverend Roger Bristow (Chairman)
Councillor Keith Onslow, Councillor Sarah Phillips and
Councillor David Jefferys (from 7.15pm).
Virginia Corbyn, Christopher Town, Rev. Steve Varney.
Jed Stone, Patricia Colling, Sanjay Gupta, Ray Hagley,
Saiyed Mahmood, Edlene Whitman and Sue Polydorou.

Also Present:

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

In Attendance:

Hannah Arnold, RE Lead, St. George's C of E Primary School
Catherine Shelley, Head of RE, Langley Park School for Girls
Anna Winson, Head of RS, Chislehurst School for Girls
Jessica Toogood, Marketing & Research Assistant, True Tube

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Rev Roger Bristow be elected as Chairman and Councillor Keith Onslow be elected as Vice-Chairman of SACRE for the 2014/2015 academic year.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kevin Brooks, Councillor Stephen Wells, Samantha Barnett, Swarn Riat and Jackie Tranchina. Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Jefferys who had a prior engagement.

Nina Newell, Head of Schools and Early Years Commissioning and Quality Assurance had also submitted her apologies. Mrs Newell had attended a pre-agenda meeting with the Chairman, the RE Adviser and the Clerk to SACRE. It had been agreed that Mrs Newell's attendance at the meeting would not be required.

The Chairman welcomed the teacher representatives who were observing the meeting and SACRE members were introduced. A welcome was also extended to Jessica Toogood, Marketing and Research Assistant from True Tube.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

**4 A) MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 12TH MARCH 2014
 AND 1ST JULY 2014**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 12th March 2014 and 1st July 2014 be confirmed.

B) MATTERS ARISING:

Any matters arising were discussed under other relevant items on this agenda.

5 ORAL UPDATE & PUBLICATIONS

a) “Fronter” Update

“Fronter” is an on-line resource available to Bromley Schools which has a section on Religious Education. This had been reviewed by the RE Adviser to ensure it was up to date and a copy of the front page was circulated to SACRE Members to illustrate its content and links to other available resources. There was some concern that teachers were not aware of “Fronter” and were not accessing its resources. The RE Adviser said that a member of the Education Department was “resetting” the way teachers can access “Fronter” and would send a notification to all schools. She would contact the member of staff concerned to see if this work had been completed, **(ACTION PSO)**.

It was confirmed that the RE pages of “Fronter” were not available to the public, although some Members thought that this would be a good idea as it was a useful resource. However following discussion it was considered that due to technical and financial constraints this would probably not be possible. However, SACRE Members asked if it would be possible for them to be given a password and access to the RE page of “Fronter”. The RE Adviser said that she would check to see if this could be done, **(ACTION PSO)**.

b) Accord Inclusive Schools Award

This Annual Award made by the Accord Coalition for Inclusive Education is given to schools which have done the most to promote inclusion, cohesion and the growth of mutual understanding, particularly on the grounds of religion and belief. It was reported that the Chairman and RE Adviser had recommended Bullers Wood School should apply for the award. Jed Stone said he would look into completing the on line nomination form on behalf of the school. It was noted that the closing date was 7th December 2014.

c) The Trojan Horse Conference

A one day conference had been held in Birmingham on 27th November 2014, to explore the impact on RE, Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC) and collective worship, following the “Trojan Horse” investigation at Birmingham schools. Keynote speakers were Joyce Miller, Chair of the Religious Education Council and Alan Brine, Ofsted’s recently retired National Adviser for RE. It was reported that the Chairman and RE Adviser had hoped to attend the conference but it had been oversubscribed. It was understood that the conference would be held again in January 2015 and further details were awaited.

d) SACRE Annual Report 2013-2014

The RE Adviser was in the process of completing the SACRE 2013-2014 Annual Report. Unfortunately she had not yet been able to obtain details of the examination results for the RE short course and would contact schools directly to ask for the information (**ACTION PSO**). *(It was noted that the RE short course did not count against school performance measures.)* When completed the Report would be passed to the Chairman for approval before being published. 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. It was also agreed that a copy of the annual report should be sent to Nicky Morgan, the Secretary of State for Education.

e) Islamic Competition

The prize giving for the Islamic Competition had taken place at Darul Uloom on 13th November 2014. Mr Mahmood had prepared a report which had previously been circulated to SACRE Members. Forty seven students aged 11 and 12 years from six schools, *(Farrington’s, Hayes, Priory, Bullers Wood, Bishop Justus and Langley Park Boys)* had submitted projects. Mr Mahmood remarked that the quality of projects had been very impressive and innovative.

The Chairman and RE Adviser had attended the event and commented positively on the very successful occasion. Jed Stone said that it had been a wonderful evening, and as always those who attended had been warmly welcomed. The parents and students who attended had been very complimentary. Mr Mahmood hoped that more schools would participate in the future. He agreed to send details of the 2015 competition to the RE Adviser for her to put on “Fronter”. The Chairman thanked Mr Mahmood for organising the Islamic Competition which promoted understanding of the Islamic faith and helped to build up good relationships.

(Councillor Jefferys arrived after consideration of this item.)

6 SACRE TRAINING -THE IMPACT OF RE
Item ED15121

Training sessions are occasionally held during the meeting to enable members to understand and carry out the duties of SACRE.

The training session which took place at the meeting focussed on the impact of RE on pupils. The RE Adviser informed members that on a recent SACRE visit to Bullers Wood School (*see minute 9 below*), a series of talks had been given by pupils in each year group, who had prepared power point presentations on what they were doing in RE and what the impact of this was on their lives.

The RE Adviser had prepared a summary of the presentations which was shown to SACRE Members. This included

- Why the pupils considered RE to be important
- Content of lessons
- Opinions
- Advantages of RE
- Fast track RE

Comments from the students included the following:

“We have learnt invaluable information that we believe will stay with us for the rest of our lives”.

“We have a lifelong passion and we don’t just do it because it looks good on a CV, but because we really enjoy learning about religions and philosophy”.

Councillor Onslow asked if any of the pupils concerned already had a religious belief. Jed Stone from Bullers Wood School said he did not have detailed information available and that this was something he would have to check, although he knew some of the pupils in year 7 were Roman Catholic. Councillor Onslow suggested that it would be a good idea for the presentations to be made available on “Fronter”.

In response to a question from Mr Mahmood, Jed Stone said that the number of RE lessons per week at Bullers Wood School varied enormously between year groups. The younger year groups had one 50 minute lesson per week but some pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 had up to five per week covering Religious Studies and Philosophy.

Councillor Jefferys considered that the views expressed by the pupils were very encouraging and that the study of RE and Philosophy helped to open students eyes to higher education and to develop wider knowledge and life experiences. The Chairman commented that on the visit to Bullers Wood School he had been impressed by a display of several well thought through pieces of work on science and ethics.

Jessica Toogood from True Tube remarked that it was part of her job to visit schools and focus on feedback from both pupils and teachers on what RE resources were needed. *(Jessica had given a presentation to SACRE members at their meeting held on 12th March 2014.)*

In concluding the SACRE training session the RE Adviser informed members that she had received responses from several schools to say that the new Bromley RE Syllabus was making an impact and they had stated that it was more interesting and diverse.

7 SELF EVALUATION AND NASACRE SURVEY ***Item ED15122***

The Annual Report of Bromley SACRE contains a self-evaluation of SACRE which is updated each year. Previously it was agreed that the RE Adviser should carry out the self-evaluation of Bromley SACRE and report as necessary. However, this meant that the members do not have an input into the document and might not have knowledge of the categories which lead to a successful SACRE committee.

The Bromley SACRE Self Evaluation for May 2013 was attached to the agenda item, together with the SACRE RE Tool: Reporting and Evaluating Toolkit. This was to enable members to look at the documents in advance of the Spring Term meeting. It was recommended that when looking at the SACRE Self Evaluation ready for discussion at the next meeting, teachers should focus on Section 1 (Standards and Quality of Provision of RE), representatives from the Church of England should look at Section 3 (Collective Worship), Councillors should look at Section 4 (Management of SACRE), and other faiths focus on Section 5 (Contribution of SACRE to promoting cohesion across the community). The different SACRE groups could of course comment on other sections if they so wished. The Clerk was asked to forward relevant contact details for SACRE members to each SACRE group, so that if they wished to do so they could discuss the matter with each other prior to the next meeting, **(ACTION CR)**.

In the meantime it was noted that the National Association of SACREs had sent out a survey which asked for details of the top three priorities for each SACRE and also how NASACRE could help and support them. The survey needed to be completed by 15th December 2014. Following discussion the following priorities were agreed:

- (i) Supporting schools in the light of new expectations for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development. *(New guidance had recently been published by the Department for Education.)*
- (ii) To connect with the interfaith groups in Bromley and other faith communities. *(It was suggested that with regard to Section 5 of the Evaluation document relating to community cohesion, it would be helpful to obtain Census data for Bromley in relation to the local religious, cultural and ethnic*

community. It was also suggested it might be helpful to establish links with the Ethnic Communities Programme Manager.)

(iii) Further raise the visibility of SACRE in schools and obtain information from them. *(It was suggested that perhaps the collective worship booklet published a few years ago could be reissued.)*

With regard to help from NASACRE it was likely that LB Bromley would only have Academies from September 2015 and it was hoped that NASACRE would be able to ensure Academies understand the role of SACRE.

The RE Adviser confirmed she would complete the NASACRE survey on behalf of Bromley SACRE

Jessica Toogood from True Tube suggested that perhaps one way to raise the profile of SACRE would be to use social media such as twitter. A Member thought it might be a good idea for Jessica to be co-opted onto Bromley SACRE and the Chairman confirmed it would be possible for this to be done. Jessica advised that this was something she would need to discuss with her manager.

RESOLVED that

(i) the RE Adviser should complete the NASACRE Survey on behalf of Bromley SACRE and

(ii) Self-Evaluation of SACRE to be discussed at the next meeting.

**8 SCHOOL VISITS - GUIDELINES
Item ED15123**

The RE Consultant had been asked to provide a document for members to use which would help when making SACRE school visits. The guidelines which had been prepared were not inspection forms and were not intended to be taken into the classroom. They were to be used as an aide memoire and for comments to be recorded by SACRE members after the school visit. The forms were then to be passed to the RE Adviser to help her with the preparation of her report for SACRE.

The final draft guidelines were submitted to SACRE members for approval following minor changes which had been suggested at their previous meeting.

RESOLVED that the final draft guidelines be approved.

**9 SCHOOL VISITS
Item ED15124**

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 17th October 2014 the Chairman, RE Adviser and Samantha Barnett, the SACRE Jewish representative visited Bullers Wood School. A detailed report on the very impressive school visit was considered by SACRE Members. (See also minute 6 above.)

It was noted that there had been two other school visits during the term, to Warren Road Primary School on 10th November and to Poverest Primary School on 24th November 2014. Reports on the visits would be submitted to the next SACRE meeting.

The RE Adviser informed SACRE Members that visits in the Spring Term would be made to Chislehurst School for Girls on 3rd February 2015, and to Darrick Wood School on 2nd March 2015. Members were asked to let the RE Adviser know if they would be able to accompany her on the visits.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the report of the visit to Bullers Wood School be noted, and**
- (ii) SACRE members should notify the RE Adviser if they would be able to attend the school visits planned for the Spring Term.**

10 STARTING TIME OF SACRE MEETINGS

Following discussion it was agreed that the next SACRE meeting would commence at 6pm.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Primary Schools – Pilot Saving Schemes

The Archbishop of Canterbury had initiated a project to encourage teaching in primary schools on how to manage money and raise children's financial awareness. It was proposed there would be a network of clubs, run by credit unions, and managed by volunteers and local churches. The Chairman said that he had been asked to be part of a steering group to look at such a pilot project. He asked SACRE Members to let him know if they knew of any suitable schools which would be interested in taking part in the pilot scheme.

Open Consultation for GCSE and A level reform for religious studies.

The RE Adviser informed SACRE members that the Department for Education was carrying out an open consultation for GCSE and A level reform for religious studies. The consultation was due to close on 29th December, and SACRE Members could respond directly to the consultation if they so wished. (*The SACRE Clerk would send them an email link to the consultation.*) Alternatively if members had any comments to make they were asked to send these to the RE Adviser by 15th December 2014.

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One of the visiting teachers asked if this subject could be discussed at a future SACRE meeting as it would potentially mean a massive change with big implications.

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Spring Term meeting would be held on Tuesday 17th March 2015 and the Summer Term meeting on Wednesday 1st July 2015.

The Meeting ended at 8.45 pm

Chairman