

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

Minutes of the meeting held at 6.00 pm on 17 March 2015

### **Present:**

Reverend Roger Bristow (Chairman)  
Councillors Kevin Brooks, Keith Onslow, David Jefferys  
and Sarah Phillips (from 6.40pm).  
Virginia Corbyn, Christopher Town and Rev Steve Varney.  
Catherine Shelley, Jackie Tranchina and Anna Winson.  
Samantha Barnett, Patricia Colling, Saiyed Mahmood,  
Mrs Polydorou, Swarn Riat and Sue Polydorou.

### **Also Present:**

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

### **In Attendance:**

Julia Waldman, Interim Consultant, Schools and Early  
Years Commissioning & Quality Assurance  
Denise Angell, RE Co-ordinator, Warren Road  
Primary School  
Rev Alan Mustoe, Rector, St Nicholas Church, Chislehurst

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

The Chairman welcomed Denise Angell, Rev Alan Mustoe and Julia Waldman to the meeting.

Councillor Phillips had previously sent apologies for her late arrival. Councillor Brooks, Councillor Phillips, Samantha Barnett, Patricia Colling and Julia Waldman apologised for having to leave the meeting early due to other commitments.

Apologies for absence were received from Hannah Arnold, Sanjay Gupta, Ray Hagley and Edlene Whitman.

## **14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**15            A) MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2ND DECEMBER 2014**

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2014 be confirmed as a correct record subject to the following amendment:**

Minute 5(e) Islamic Competition. After the first paragraph add:

The prizes were presented by Mr Stephen Lloyd MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Religious Education.

**B) MATTERS ARISING:**

Minute 5(c) The Trojan Horse Conference.

The Chairman and RE Consultant would be attending the conference which was being held on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2015 in St Albans. They would report back at the next meeting.

**16            ORAL UPDATE & PUBLICATIONS**

**a)            SACRE Annual Report 2013-2014**

This had been completed and 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. A copy had also been sent to Nicky Morgan, the Secretary of State for Education. This had been acknowledged by the Ministerial and Public Communications Division at the Department of Education.

**b)            NASACRE Conference and AGM**

The Chairman and RE Consultant would be attending the NASACRE Conference and AGM which was being held on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2015 in Birmingham. They would report back at the next meeting.

**c)            Islamic Competition**

The prize giving for the Islamic Competition would take place at Darul Uloom on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2015. Entries from schools needed to be received by the end of September 2015. The RE Consultant confirmed that details of the competition were available to schools on "Fronter".

**d)            Discovery RE**

A number of SACREs and schools had received mailings from commercial providers of RE Resources making the claim that their products can help schools deliver the relevant locally agreed syllabus by mapping the syllabus to their specific product for primary schools. (A charge is made for their services.) NASACRE had given guidance to SACREs on how to respond to

these approaches. The Chairman reported that he and the RE Consultant had received a communication from such a provider; "Discovery RE", which had used the new agreed Bromley RE syllabus as a basis for their product. The RE Consultant commented that in addition to the statutory requirements for RE, the Bromley syllabus also has suggested questions, activities and resources for schools, and she was available to support them in delivering the syllabus. Following discussion SACRE Members were of the opinion that Bromley's locally agreed RE syllabus was a comprehensive and up to date resource which should be adequate for the needs of Bromley children and asked the RE Consultant to advise schools accordingly. **ACTION PSO**

**17 SACRE REPORT FROM THE RE CONSULTANT**  
*Item ED15170315*

**A) LETTER FROM LORD NASH**

Lord Nash, the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Schools, had sent a letter to all local authorities outlining the workings of SACRE and discussing a number of items regarding Religious Education. SACRE Members considered the letter and noted that it had been forwarded to all schools in Bromley. NASACRE had suggested that SACREs respond to the letter and had issued guidance for doing so. It was also suggested that Lord Nash's letter and SACREs response be copied to the Director of Children's Services and the appropriate Portfolio Holder.

The various points raised in Lord Nash's letter were discussed. Whilst some SACRE members considered it was not necessary to respond to the letter, it was agreed by a majority that a reply should be sent. The Chairman and RE Consultant agreed to prepare an appropriate response.

**RESOLVED that the Chairman send a response to Lord Nash's letter on behalf of Bromley SACRE.**

**B) SACRE SELF EVALUATION**

*(This item was considered at the beginning of the meeting when all SACRE Members were present.)*

The Annual Report of Bromley SACRE contains a self-evaluation of SACRE which is updated each year. Previously it was agreed that the RE Consultant should carry out the self-evaluation and report as necessary. However, this means 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.

SACRE Members were asked to consider the top 3 priorities decided for Bromley SACRE in response to the NASACRE survey carried out in December 2014 (*see minute 7 of minutes dated 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2014*), and to discuss the self-evaluation of Bromley SACRE.

The SACRE Reporting & Evaluation Toolkit was used and SACRE Members spent time at the meeting within their groups discussing the self-evaluation.

Teachers were asked to focus on Section 1  
(Standards and Quality of Provision of RE)

Representatives from the Church of England were asked to focus on Section 3 (Collective Worship) (*They had also met prior to the meeting.*)

Councillors were asked to focus on Section 4  
(Management of SACRE)

Other faiths were asked to focus on Section 5  
(Contribution of SACRE to promoting cohesion across the community).

Members could comment on other sections if they wished.

The RE Consultant would complete Section 2 (The effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus).

Results of the self-evaluation can be seen in the table appended to these minutes. Members commented on the reasons for making their decisions.

Additional points arising from the discussions are listed below.

### **Section 1 - Standards and Quality of Provision of RE**

The teaching group on SACRE considered it was a good idea for schools to “cluster” and commented that more input from different faith groups would be greatly appreciated. The RE Consultant referred to the support given through the RE Advisers network meetings which were organised for non-specialist primary school co-ordinators. The teaching group said it would be useful for them to be able to share email addresses for the Heads of RE and RE co-ordinators. The RE Adviser would see if she could obtain the relevant details.

**ACTION PSO**

The Chairman commented that it was important to find different ways of communicating and since the last SACRE meeting he had set up a Bromley SACRE Facebook page for anyone to post relevant things to it. He would of course monitor the page to ensure it contained appropriate content and hoped that it would prove to be a useful resource (*see also minute 18*).

### **Section 3 - Collective Worship**

*Key Area 3B* - The C of E Group considered that this was only just established and fell down on clause 3. Sources of information were limited to their own knowledge of schools and school visits, and also Ofsted reports. It was considered that more could be done to become firmly established by signposting advice and training available. Mention was made in particular of the document produced by Bromley SACRE in 2008 - Refreshing Collective Worship in Bromley Schools “Reflective Pools” and it was suggested that schools be reminded of this. The RE Consultant advised that this document

was available on "Fronter" and she would remind schools of this when undertaking school visits.

**Key Area 3C - Responding to requests for determinations**

It was considered that this was not applicable. Procedures would be put in place if and when required.

#### **Section 4 - Management of SACRE**

The question was raised as to whether Bromley SACRE ever met with other SACREs. The RE Consultant said that they did not and informed members that she also supported three other local SACREs. She remarked that the SACREs were all very different. It was suggested and agreed that that it would be a good idea for the four SACRE Chairmen to meet. The RE Consultant agreed to liaise with the Chairman regarding a possible meeting of the four SACRE Chairman.

**ACTION: PSO & Chairman**

It was suggested that it would be better for any SACRE training to take place as a separate session rather than as part of a SACRE meeting. The RE Consultant informed Members that training which had taken place previously had been sourced from a CD produced by NASACRE. A Member commented on the successful event which took place when the revised RE syllabus was launched.

Councillor Brooks asked whether there were any links with the increasing number of Pentecostal Churches in his Ward (*Penge and Cator*). The Chairman advised that currently there was not and Councillor Brooks said that he would look into this.

**ACTION: Councillor Brooks**

#### **Section 5 - Contribution of SACRE to promoting cohesion across the community**

The other faith groups considered that there was a need for greater understanding of different faiths and this could be developed for example through inter faith activities.

Mr Riat commented that although major religions were represented on SACRE there were also a lot of very small religious groups meeting in the Borough, for example some groups met at Community House. They also met at halls and houses in the borough. He thought it would be useful and of benefit to SACRE to undertake research to find out where such services were being held. The Chairman considered that this was something which would be difficult to find out. The RE Consultant said that in the past the South London Interfaith group had tried to do some mapping, but as things change rapidly she felt it would be almost impossible to get an up to date picture. Councillor Jefferys suggested that perhaps this was something which could be done through the Archdeacon's office with parishes being asked to provide such information which was known in their areas. It was agreed that this would be a good idea and the Chairman agreed to contact the Archdeacon to see if this could be done.

**ACTION Chairman**

**RESOLVED that the SACRE Self-Evaluation be agreed and the action points above be pursued.**

### **C) SACRE DRAFT DEVELOPMENT PLAN - APRIL 2015 TO MARCH 2016**

A development plan was drafted each year by the RE Consultant/Adviser which outlined the work plan for the forthcoming year.

SACRE Members considered and discussed a draft development plan for the period April 2015 to March 2016. The plan included the priorities that were decided by SACRE Members and sent to NASACRE in December 2014.

Rev Varney commented that the development plan would need to be revised in light of the action points which had arisen under the self-evaluation item.

Councillor Jefferys suggested it might be useful for the four SACRE groups to discuss at the next meeting whether they wished self-evaluation to progress from established status to advanced.

Councillor Onslow commented that it would be useful to monitor SACRE's position at the beginning of the period and what it had achieved at the end. It would be useful to have a measure of year on year progress.

The RE Consultant said that in order to find out if the new RE syllabus was embedded in schools she would send them a short questionnaire to find out if they were using it.

**ACTION PSO**

**RESOLVED that the SACRE draft Development Plan for 2015/2016 be agreed and looked at as an item at each meeting.**

### **D) SCHOOL VISITS**

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 10<sup>th</sup> November 2014 the Chairman and RE Consultant visited Warren Road Primary School, having been invited by Mrs Denise Angell the RE Co-ordinator (*who was in attendance at the SACRE meeting*). A detailed report on the very good school visit was considered by SACRE Members.

Mrs Angell suggested that it would be helpful for schools to be sent a copy of the report as soon as possible after the visits had been made, with a note to say that the report would be submitted to the next SACRE meeting. The RE Consultant agreed that this would be done in future.

SACRE Members also considered a report on a visit to Poverest Primary School on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2014, which was made by the Chairman, the RE Consultant, Councillor Keith Onslow and Mrs Edlene Whitman, the Free churches representative. Unfortunately they were not able to see an RE lesson during the visit, but there was evidence in each classroom that RE had taken place and there were a number of displays relating to RE throughout the school.

The RE Consultant hoped that a visit could be made to Hayes Secondary School during the summer term. She would contact SACRE Members when arrangements had been made to see if they would be able to accompany her on the visit.

**RESOLVED that**

**(i) the reports of the visits to Warren Road Primary School and Poverest Road Primary School be noted,**

**(ii) the RE Consultant to notify SACRE Members of arrangements for school visits during the summer term.**

**18 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Communication**

The Chairman informed SACRE members that

i) He had opened two social media accounts; a SACRE Facebook page (*mentioned above*) and a twitter account – tweet @Rev\_Roger He had also asked the Local Authority if it would be possible for a Bromley email address to be set up for him as SACRE Chair. In the meantime he could be contacted via email on [vicar@htc-bc.org.uk](mailto:vicar@htc-bc.org.uk)

ii) A new series of 5 Religious Education programmes for Key Stage 2 pupils was due to start the following week on BBC2. These would cover Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Judaism and Hinduism.

The RE Adviser also urged SACRE Members to listen to a very informative Radio 4 programme, “Beyond Belief” which had been aired the previous day.

**Expansion of new Muslim Centre in Croydon Road, Keston**

The Chairman informed SACRE Members that a planning application had been submitted to the Council to expand the Al-Emaan Muslim Centre in Croydon Road, Keston and to increase the number of parking spaces. The Centre is on the site of a former Methodist Church. It was noted that permission was not needed to convert the church into a mosque as both are designated places of worship. It was understood that there was concern locally about traffic issues and parking at the premises which was near a busy road junction. The Chairman noted that communication between the Centre and local groups / residents had not been as good as it might be and expressed the hope that this might improve. Amongst activities proposed at the Centre is a school of Islamic studies and this could potentially become a valuable resource for SACRE and for local schools.

*(NB: Since this meeting the Council had rejected the application for planning permission. It is understood that the Centre managers do not intend to appeal this decision.)*

**19            DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015  
Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2015  
Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016  
Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016

All meetings to start at 6pm

The Meeting ended at 8.00 pm

Chairman