

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

Minutes of the meeting held at 6.00 pm on 1 July 2015

### **Present:**

Reverend Roger Bristow (Chairman)  
Councillors Mary Cooke, Robert Evans, David Jefferys,  
Keith Onslow and Sarah Phillips (from 6.40pm)  
Ms Arnold, Mrs Barnett, Mr Hagley, Mr Mahmood,  
Mrs Polydorou and Mr Town

### **Also Present:**

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

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

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Mary Cooke and Councillor Robert Evans, newly appointed SACRE Members to the meeting and SACRE Members were introduced.

Councillor Phillips had previously sent apologies for her late arrival. Mr Mahmood apologised for having to leave the meeting early at 7.25pm.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kevin Brooks, Virginia Corbyn, Swarn Riat, Rev Steve Varney and Edlene Whitman. SACRE Members were sorry to hear that Mr Riat was unwell and wished him a speedy recovery.

Julia Waldman, Interim Consultant, Schools and Early Years Commissioning & Quality Assurance had attended a pre meeting with the Chairman, RE Consultant and the Clerk to SACRE.

The Chairman informed SACRE Members that this would be Christine Reeks' last attendance as Clerk as she would shortly be retiring. The Chairman thanked Christine for her work on behalf of SACRE and wished her well for the future.

## **21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

## **22 A) MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17TH MARCH 2015**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2015 be confirmed as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

Present: delete “Mrs Polydorou”, as her attendance had been recorded twice.

**B) MATTERS ARISING:**

Minute 16 (d) Discovery RE:

The RE Consultant had emailed schools to advise them that purchasing additional material from Discovery RE was not considered necessary, as Bromley’s locally agreed RE syllabus was a comprehensive and up to date resource which should be adequate for the needs of Bromley children.

Minute 17 (A) Letter from Lord Nash:

The Chairman had sent a reply to Lord Nash on behalf of Bromley SACRE but no response had been received.

Minute 17 (B) Section 1 – Standards and Quality of Provision of RE:

The RE Adviser had been unable to obtain specific email addresses for the Heads of RE and RE Co-ordinators, but this might be possible via a questionnaire which was to be sent to schools - see matters arising 17 (C).

Minute 17 (B) Section 4 – Management of Bromley SACRE:

Arrangements were being made for the SACRE Chairman to meet with the Chairman of Croydon SACRE.

**ACTION Chairman**

Minute 17(B) Section 5 – The Archdeacon’s Office had emailed incumbents on behalf of the SACRE Chairman to see if an up to date picture could be obtained of small religious groups meeting in the Borough. Unfortunately no responses had been received by the Chairman. It was agreed that a further attempt should be made to obtain this information and Councillor Jefferys suggested that perhaps churchwardens should be copied into the email sent to incumbents.

**ACTION Chairman**

Minute 17(C) SACRE Draft Development Plan:

The RE Consultant was preparing a draft questionnaire in order to find out if the new Bromley RE syllabus was embedded in schools. This would be sent to the Chairman and Julia Waldman (Interim Consultant, Schools and Early Years Commissioning & Quality Assurance) for approval before being sent to schools in September 2015.

**ACTION PSO**

**23 ORAL UPDATE & PUBLICATIONS**

a) The Trojan Horse Conference:

On 20th March 2015 the Chairman and RE Consultant attended a conference on “The Trojan Horse aftermath – implications and opportunities”, which was organised by NASACRE (The National Association of SACREs) and AREIAC (The Association of Religious Education Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants). A verbal report on the conference was given at the meeting.

Twenty-one inspections and monitoring visits of Birmingham Schools in response to the Trojan Horse Allegations were carried out in 2014.

As a result of the 'Trojan Horse affair' the Government have decreed that schools should be teaching pupils about British Values. Departmental advice on promoting basic important British values as part of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development can be found at;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-fundamental-british-values-through-smsc>

A new Ofsted Common Inspection Framework and with it a new 'Schools Inspection Handbook' would be implemented in September 2015. This set out details for the inspection of RE in Maintained, Voluntary Aided, Voluntary Controlled schools and for Academies and Free schools. A link to the Common Inspection Framework and related documents is given below –

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/changes-to-education-inspection-from-september-2015>

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Religious Education undertook to gather evidence on the teaching of RE and the summary of the report with indicators of what schools and Governors can do to ensure that RE is given sufficient time and budget can be found for both Primary and Secondary schools at;

<http://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/educators/briefing-papers/school-governors-responsibilities-for-re>

b) Samantha Barnett, the Jewish Representative on SACRE informed the meeting that she had attended an event the previous Sunday at the offices of The British Board of Deputies in London, to which all Jewish SACRE representatives had been invited. John Levy who is involved with the 16-19 years study programme gave a very interesting talk about Israel and the Middle East and spoke in an unbiased way about the politics behind religion and practice. Another speaker Dave Francis from "RE: On Line" spoke about the resources available from the website. This is an unbiased website covering all faiths which supports school based teachers of RE, [www.reonline.org.uk/](http://www.reonline.org.uk/) The resources include lesson plans and signposts users to relevant radio and television programmes. There is also a weekly facility called "email a believer" when pupils can email questions to a person of faith and receive answers.

At the event the SACRE Members present spoke about their individual SACREs. Mrs Barnett said that other representatives were impressed with how the Bromley agreed syllabus had been put together. The RE Consultant commented that Bromley teachers and the Bromley SACRE Members had made a significant contribution to the revised syllabus.

Mrs Barnett concluded by saying that the event had been a very good sharing experience. It was hoped that this would at least be an annual event which would be held in different parts of the country.

## **24 REPORTS FROM THE RE CONSULTANT**

Report SA15001

### **A) NASACRE CONFERENCE AND AGM**

The Chairman and RE Consultant had attended the NASACRE Conference and AGM which was held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2015 in Birmingham.

The Keynote Speaker was the Rt Hon Charles Clarke, Secretary of State for Education & Skills 2002-2004, Visiting Professor, School of Politics, Philosophy, Language and Communication Studies, at the University of East Anglia. The Seminar Leaders were Denise Cush, Professor of Religion and Education at Bath Spa University and Mary Myatt, Lead Ofsted Inspector, and Culham St Gabriel's Lead Consultant for Teacher Conferences.

The Chairman had prepared notes of the meeting and these were considered by SACRE Members.

At the Conference Charles Clarke made reference to a pamphlet which he had co-authored with Linda Woodhead on Religion and Belief in Schools which was due to be published in the summer. SACRE Members were informed that the document had now been published and could be found on the following link <http://faithdebates.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/A-New-Settlement-for-Religion-and-Belief-in-schools.pdf>

*(The recommendations made represent the personal views of the authors', formed on the basis of relevant recent research and their respective expertise in politics and religion.)* One of the recommendations made was that there should be a nationally agreed RE syllabus.

During the Seminar on "Meeting the Challenge", colleagues from different SACREs were able to network and discuss their work in-depth. A proforma was used to collect contributions and comments arising from the discussions. These would be collated and ideas for "Meeting the Challenge" would be put on the NASACRE website in due course. *(A training session based on the pro-forma was undertaken by SACRE Members - see item 24B below).*

SACRE Members discussed the role of SACREs, particularly in the light of Local Authorities diminishing role with regard to Academies and Free Schools. The Chairman remarked that whilst SACREs retain responsibility for ensuring good RE and collective worship they have very little power to enforce this.

### **B) SACRE TRAINING SESSION**

A training session took place to consider issues affecting Bromley SACRE and ways to solve these. SACRE Members divided into small groups and the proforma referred to in the above minute was used to collect contributions and

comments arising from the discussions. The proforma was based on the top 8 challenges highlighted by SACREs at the 2014 NASACRE Conference.

SACRE Members briefly discussed a few of the comments made. One in particular was the suggestion that it would be a good idea for SACRE Chairmen to meet once a year to discuss and share experiences. The RE Consultant advised that in the past an annual meeting of London and South East SACREs had been held but this had not taken place for a few years.

The completed proformas were passed to the RE Consultant who would analyse the results and prepare a report to be submitted at the next SACRE meeting. The results would inform SACREs future work in conjunction with the annual development plan.

**RESOLVED that the RE Consultant analyse the responses from SACRE Members and report back at the next meeting.**

### **C) 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 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2015 the Chairman, RE Consultant and Rev Steve Varney visited Chislehurst Girls School. (*Miss Anna Winson, the Head of the RE Department is a teacher representative on SACRE.*) The Chairman and RE Consultant also visited Darrick Wood School on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2015. Detailed reports on the very good school visits were considered by SACRE Members.

The RE Consultant expressed the view that both schools would be suitable to apply for the RE Quality Mark, as they are committed to excellent RE teaching and learning. The RE Quality Mark has bronze, silver and gold levels and details can be found at <http://www.reqm.org/> The Chairman commented that a lot of church schools had applied for and had achieved the RE Quality Mark. It was noted however that budgetary considerations needed to be taken into account when applying for the Quality Mark.

The RE Consultant informed SACRE Members that the previous week she had visited Hayes Secondary School with Christopher Town and a report of the visit would be submitted to the next SACRE meeting.

Arrangements would be made for school visits to be undertaken during the autumn term and the RE Consultant would contact SACRE Members in due course to see if they would be able to accompany her on the visits.

**RESOLVED that**

**(i) the reports of the visits to Chislehurst Girls School and Darrick Wood School be noted,**

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

## **25 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **RE and British Values**

The Chairman informed SACRE Members that “RE Today” [www.retoday.org.uk](http://www.retoday.org.uk) had recently published a booklet entitled *Religious Education and British Values*, giving up to date guidance and practical suggestions to help teachers of RE in UK schools to respond to government requirements to promote British Values. Prior to the meeting he had spoken to the Interim Consultant for Schools and Early Years Commissioning & Quality Assurance to ask if it would be possible for a copy of this booklet to be distributed to all Bromley maintained schools. Ms Waldman had agreed to look into possible funding for this. The Chairman remarked that it would also be useful for this publication to be brought to the attention of Bromley Academies and Free Schools.

### **Islamic Competition**

SACRE Members were reminded that 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.

## **26 DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

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 7.40 pm

Chairman