

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Minutes of the meeting held at 6.00 pm on 9 March 2016

Present:

Reverend Roger Bristow (Chairman)

Councillors Kevin Brooks, Mary Cooke, David Jefferys and
Keith Onslow

Mrs D Angell, Mrs S Barnett, Mr S Mahmood,
Mr A Nandra, Mr C Town and Reverend S Varney

Also Present:

Penny Smith-Orr, RE Consultant/Advisor
Julia Waldman, Interim Head of Schools and Early Years
Quality Assurance and Commissioning

34 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The Chairman welcomed Mr Nandra, the new Sikh representative to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Robert Evans, Councillor Sarah Phillips, Virginia Corbyn, Hannah Arnold, Jed Stone, Swarn Riat, Edlene Whitman and Sue Polydorou.

35 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

36 A) MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17TH NOVEMBER 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 17th November 2015 be confirmed as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

Minute 31: Reports from the RE Consultant – Teaching and Learning of British Values. In the last paragraph amend “Cllr Sarah Brooks” to read “Cllr Sarah Phillips”.

B) MATTERS ARISING:

Minute 30: Oral Update and Publications

Members confirmed that they had received login details for the NASACRE website.

The Chairman noted that he had not yet met with the Chairman of Croydon SACRE, but hoped to do so before the next meeting.

The RE Consultant advised SACRE members that she could arrange to meet the Archdeacon to discuss the establishment of an inter faith group in Bromley, although it was not in her remit to take the implementation forward.

Minute 31: Reports from the RE Consultant – SACRE Analysis of Top Challenges for SACREs

The Chairman noted that the drafting of a letter to Academies in order to encourage their engagement with Bromley SACRE had not been assigned to a particular member at the last meeting. It was agreed that the letter should be extended to Free Schools and for the RE Consultant to take this forward.

ACTION: PSO

Samantha Barnett informed SACRE members that she had not currently received any further information from the Jewish Forum regarding future meeting dates.

RESOLVED that:

(i) SACRE members would be updated in due course concerning the anticipated meeting between the Chairman of Croydon SACRE and Bromley SACRE.

(ii) The RE Consultant would update the SACRE members by the next meeting on the Archdeacon's response to the idea of an inter faith group for Bromley.

(iii) The RE Consultant would draft a letter that could be given to the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Education to write to Academies and Free Schools to encourage their engagement with Bromley SACRE.

37 ORAL UPDATE & PUBLICATIONS

a) SACRE Annual Report 2014-2015

This had been completed by the RE Consultant and distributed to SACRE Members, all Councillors, the Director of Education, libraries, schools and NASACRE. A copy had also been sent to Nicky Morgan MP, the Secretary of State for Education.

A discussion took place regarding the table of exam results for Bromley schools. It was noted that there had been a reduction in the number of students taking RE GCSE as the short course was no longer being offered. There was also a lower number of students nationally taking 'A' Level RE, but members were pleased to hear that there had been an increase in the number of Bromley students. The RE Consultant informed the SACRE that new RE courses were being introduced in September 2016, but were not yet set by the exam boards. A number of schools had commented that they would not

participate until the following year when the new courses would be fully established.

Members were keen to compare Bromley's exam results with those of other SACREs. The RE Consultant suggested that results could be compared with other south east London authorities for comparison. The tables of results could also be used when visiting schools to question the number of students being entered, against the potential number of students.

ACTION: Data request to the performance team to be requested

The RE Consultant advised the SACRE that the membership table would need to indicate attendance at meetings in next year's annual report.

b) NASACRE AGM

The Chairman and Julia Waldman would be attending the NASACRE Conference and AGM which was being held on Tuesday 17th May 2016 in Westminster. The RE Consultant would also be attending on behalf of Croydon SACRE. They would report back on the Conference and AGM at the next meeting.

38 NASACRE BULLETIN INFORMATION DISCUSSION

In the NASACRE January 2016 Briefing (Number 10) a summary of recent key reports was included which related to Religious Education and collective worship, and their relevance to SACREs. Members were invited to divide into their membership groups to discuss.

The key issue arising from the discussions was the need for clarification of the difference between collective worship and inclusive assemblies. It was felt there was a problem with the title 'collective worship'. Ms Angell commented that if a teacher leading it did not have a faith they felt uncomfortable. She also felt that if the requirement for collective worship was removed, children would lose the opportunity to experience praying or reflecting, and if they had not experienced it, they would not be able to choose to do it in the future. Other members felt that liberal values were needed, and that people should not be put in a position to do something they do not want to do.

Reverend Varney expressed the opinion that the difference between collective worship and inclusive assemblies was who it was aimed towards. He felt that collective worship was giving to another transcendent being, whereas inclusive assemblies were more person-centred for their own benefit and to help them engage with their feelings.

The Chairman concluded by saying that he expected to hear more regarding the implications for SACRE generally, and in Bromley, at the NASACRE AGM and would revisit at the next meeting.

(Julia Waldman left the meeting after consideration of this item)

39 REPORTS FROM THE RE CONSULTANT

a) SACRE Self Evaluation

This item was deferred to the next meeting. It was suggested that the membership groups met prior to the next meeting to look at the following sections of the SACRE Reporting and Evaluating Toolkit (Appendix 1), and come ready to discuss their thoughts:

Group A members (representatives of other faiths and Christian denominations) were asked to focus on section 5 - Contribution of SACRE to promoting cohesion across the community.

Group B members (representatives from the Church of England) were asked to focus on section 3 - Collective worship.

Group C members (teachers) were asked to focus on section 2 - The effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus.

Group D members (Councillors) were asked to focus on section 4 - Management of SACRE.

b) SACRE Draft Action Plan

An action plan was drafted by the RE Consultant which outlined the work plan for the summer term 2016. She advised the group that an annual cycle of activity includes drafting the annual report 2015/16 and sending to NASACRE and Department for Education, attending the Islamic Competition and maintained school visits.

Councillors were surprised to hear of there being uncertainty over funding as the budget had already been set. It was agreed that they would contact Councillor Peter Fortune, Portfolio Holder for Education to get clarification. It was noted that it was currently law for Local Authorities to have a SACRE in place.

ACTION: Councillor Jefferys

RESOLVED that the SACRE draft action plan for the summer term 2016 be agreed.

c) School Visits

SACRE members visit local schools in order to observe the teaching of RE and to offer support to the RE Coordinator of the school. In the autumn term the RE Consultant had visited two Academy schools as a result of requests from new RE Coordinators.

On 25th November 2015 the RE Consultant visited Pickhurst Junior School, having been invited by Ms Fiona Barr. A visit was also made to Darrick Wood Infant School on 2nd December 2015 at the request of Miss Isabella Samuels. Both teacher had been NQT's last year and had been allocated the role of RE

Coordinators. Reports on the school visits were considered by SACRE members. The RE Consultant commented that both visits had been very positive.

It was noted that the Chairman and RE Consultant had completed another school visit earlier in the day, and would provide a report at the next meeting along with any further visits made.

RESOLVED that the reports of the visits to Pickhurst Junior School and Darrick Wood Infant School be noted.

40 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Mahmood informed the SACRE of a teacher event at Chislehurst School for Girls which he had participated in. It had been organised by Bromley SACRE member, Anna Winson, and had been a great success. It was suggested that the Chairman be briefed to feedback to the group at the next meeting.

ACTION: Chairman

41 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Subsequent to this meeting, the following dates of future meetings were confirmed:

Wednesday 29th June 2016
Wednesday 9th November 2016
Wednesday 8th March 2017

All meetings to start at 6pm

The Meeting ended at 8.00 pm

Chairman

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