

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Minutes of the meeting held at 6.00 pm on 8 March 2017

Present:

Reverend Roger Bristow (Chairman)

Councillors Kevin Brooks, Russell Mellor and Keith Onslow
Ms H Arnold, Mrs V Corbyn, Mr S Mahmood, Mr A Nandra,
Mr J Stone, Mr C Town and Reverend S Varney

Also Present:

Carol Arnfield, LBB Head of Service, Education
Kieran Osborne, Educational Advisor

20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Robert Evans, Councillor David Jefferys, Councillor Sarah Phillips, Denise Angell, Samantha Barnett, Ray Hagley and Edlene Whitman.

21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

22 A) MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7TH DECEMBER 2016

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 7th December 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.

B) MATTERS ARISING

Minute 15c: Tell MAMA Report

The Chairman confirmed that the minutes of the SACRE meeting were sent to the Local Authority and would therefore have been advised of the report.

Minute 16: SACRE Draft Action Plan and Feedback from September Meeting
Virginia Corbyn confirmed that Lee Kings at Bishop Justus Secondary School, part of the Aquinas Trust, would be happy to work with her to facilitate networking meetings for teachers from September 2017. The Chairman advised members that further networking events could be organised by Luke Baker, Head of PRE Department at Ravens Wood School. The Ravens Wood

School network was felt to be largely exam orientated, whilst the Aquinas Trust network was considered more general and incorporated primary schools. The Chairman planned to speak with Mr Baker regarding the possibility of him working together with Mr Kings, and would allow the networking to cover a wider group of teachers.

23 ORAL UPDATE & PUBLICATIONS

a) SACRE Annual Report 2015-2016

A draft copy of the SACRE Annual Report 2015-2016 was circulated to members. The Chairman advised that the report was mainly factual and included exam results tables, membership and attendance at meetings. Members were asked to take the report away, read it, and email the Chairman, Educational Advisor, LBB Head of Service – Education and the Clerk to advise of any glaring errors by Friday 10th March 2017. This would allow the final version of the report to be officially submitted the following week. A copy of the SACRE Annual Report 2015-2016 was appended to the minutes.

b) NASACRE AGM

The Chairman would be attending the NASACRE Conference and AGM which was being held on Tuesday 16th May 2017 in York. As the Educational Advisor was unable to attend, there was scope for another member of the SACRE to take this place. The provisional conference programme stated that arrival and registration would take place from 11.00am, with the close of the conference at 4.30pm. Members were advised to contact the Clerk as soon as possible if they would like to attend.

The Chairman would report back on the Conference and AGM at the next meeting.

24 THE BIG NASACRE SURVEY 2017

In the January 2017 edition of the NASACRE – SACRE Briefing (Issue 13), NASACRE launched The BIG NASACRE Survey. This was an online questionnaire that they had asked SACREs to take some time to discuss and answer.

Prior to the meeting, the Chairman had informally approached a few SACRE members and requested they look at the survey document from their particular perspective, and answer the questions as best they could in order to aid Bromley SACRE in making a response to NASACRE. Copies of the responses received were provided to all SACRE members, and they were asked to review the survey questions, consider and comment on them. Members were further asked to agree the final responses to be submitted to NASACRE on behalf of Bromley SACRE.

At the meeting, the Chairman guided members through each individual question, and a consensus was agreed for the answers that would be submitted to NASACRE. The agreed final responses can be seen appended to these minutes.

25 SCHOOL VISITS

SACRE members visit local schools to observe Collective Worship and the teaching of Religious Education. On Monday 30th January 2017, the Chairman and the Educational Advisor had visited Ravens Wood School, along with SACRE members; Ms Hannah Arnold, Mr Arvinder Nandra and Reverend Steve Varney. A detailed report of the school visit was considered by SACRE members.

The Chairman commented that the SACRE members had very much enjoyed the time they spent at Ravens Wood School. They had met with an extremely eloquent Year 9 student who had described his experience of RE and how the school used assemblies as a time for silence and reflection. Members had also been extremely impressed with the 'Philosophy Kings', a group of KS4 and KS5 students that met with teachers to consider the great philosophical issues and philosophers.

The Chairman said he had subsequently met with the Headteacher, Ms Sally Spence, who was extremely positive and keen to explore further links between Ravens Wood School and Holy Trinity Church.

It was noted that the Chairman, Educational Advisor and SACRE members had completed a visit to Blenheim Primary School earlier in the day. The Chairman commented that it had been a very positive experience and he was encouraged to see a huge change from the school he visited eight years ago. The Educational Advisor informed members that the school served a disadvantaged community and had a diverse intake of faiths, yet had managed to produce an impressive strong and cohesive programme.

Members queried how the school's success could be explained. The Educational Advisor responded that he felt the most important factor was the Headteacher, Mrs Lynda Doel. Secondly, he believed that focussing on the community that the school served and working with the parents had created a holistic approach. They had created a school community which had respect for others, and had guidelines on how to engage with each other.

Members enquired as to whether the schools provided any comments on how they felt about the visit of SACRE members. The Chairman said that the Headteacher at Ravens Wood School had felt the visits were a good and positive experience for the school, and the Headteacher at Blenheim Primary School appreciated the SACRE members showing an interest. The Educational Advisor agreed and said he felt that before the visits, the Headteachers would probably have thought the SACRE would be holding

them to account. It was important that when SACRE members attended Headteacher events they emphasised they were here to work with the schools in a supportive role.

Councillor Onslow enquired as to whether any official feedback was received from the schools regarding the visit of SACRE members. The Educational Advisor suggested that when he sent a letter of thanks to the Headteachers he could include a copy of his visit report and a questionnaire asking for feedback. SACRE members agreed that this should be actioned and said it would be useful to have a sentence added into the school visit reports stating what the school had thought about the visit.

ACTION: Educational Advisor

The Chairman informed members that he had received an invite from James Dixon Primary School in Anerley to attend their RE Day. It would take place on the morning of Thursday 30th March 2017, and classes would be looking at different world faiths and what they believed about life, and faith groups would be visiting the school. The Chairman had asked the school if it would be possible to extend the invitation for SACRE members to attend with him, and he was currently awaiting a response. A number of SACRE members indicated that they would be interested in attending if the invitation was extended, and the Chairman confirmed he would advise all SACRE members if it was agreed.

A report on the visit to Blenheim Primary School would be provided at the next meeting along with any further visits made and feedback received.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the report of the visit to Ravens Wood School be noted.**
- (ii) the Clerk to notify SACRE members of arrangements for school visits during the summer term.**

26 SACRE DRAFT ACTION PLAN

SACRE members had been provided with a draft action plan that had been drafted in June 2016, which outlined the core activities for the autumn term 2016 and spring term 2017 based on previous year's activities.

A member commented that objective number 4 – *'Engage with local schools to observe and understand Collective Worship approaches'*, should be amended. They felt it should not just be 'Collective Worship' and that 'Religious Education' should be added to read: *'Engage with local schools to observe and understand Religious Education and Collective Worship approaches'*.

Another member highlighted objective number 7 – *'Signposting to or guidance for schools (including Governing Bodies) on duties related to collective worship, particularly for Academy schools'*, and asked if school Governors

were ever present for the visit of SACRE members, and whether they should be invited. The Chairman agreed that this was an interesting point, as when he had previously spoken with school Governors at events, they had not known about the SACRE and did not know what should take place in schools with regards to Religious Education and Collective Worship.

The Educational Advisor informed members that his report of the SACRE visit to Ravens Wood School had been passed on to the school Governors, and he felt there was no reason why they could not say to the schools that the SACRE would welcome the involvement of Governors during the visit. Members questioned whether the presence of school Governors would inhibit the Headteacher. The Educational Advisor said that he did not think this would be the case and that the Headteachers would welcome the Governors being involved. It was noted that many school Governors had roles for overseeing specific areas of the curriculum, one of which was spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, so could have an interest in attending the visit, but it may be a case that they would be unavailable to attend during the day.

The Chairman commented that any invite would need to be worded carefully to ensure that the school did not feel like the visit was an inspection. There was a need to be subtle and diplomatic and could maybe just enquire if there was a Governor that had an interest in being present during the visit.

27 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members commented that in the SACRE Annual Report 2015-2016, the GCSE Full Course in Religious Studies had a divergence of entries and some schools appeared to enter a low number of students. It was queried if anything could be done about this, and members wondered if it was an issue of compliance. The Educational Advisor noted that these were only the figures for the full course, and that a number of schools would only have put students in for the short course. The Chairman said that it would be interesting to compare the figures in the next Annual Report, as no short course option would be available for Religious Studies.

28 DATES OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 12th July 2017
Wednesday 6th December 2017
Wednesday 28th February 2018

All meetings to start at 6pm

The Meeting ended at 7.35 pm

Chairman