

# **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2010

## **Present:**

Mr Martin Sweet (Chairman)  
Councillors Charsley and Payne  
Ms Thompson, Mr Town,  
Mrs James, Mr Stone,  
Mrs Colling, Mr Gupta and  
Mr Mahmood

## **Also Present:**

Mrs Penny Smith-Orr, R E Adviser

### **1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN & VICE-CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED** that Mr M Sweet be elected as Chairman and Councillor Mrs Anne Manning be elected as Vice-Chairman of SACRE for the 2010/11 academic Year.

### **2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF ALTERNATE MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Manning, MacMull and McBride, Rev Varney, Mrs Hawkes, Ms Honey, Ms Tranchina, Mr Hagle, Mrs Michaelis, Mr Riat and Mrs Polydorou. Apologies were also received from Dr George Searle. The Chairman welcomed the following new Members to the meeting: Mrs Colling, (Roman Catholic Representative), and Ms Thompson (Church of England Representative). Ms Honey, the new Teacher Representative was unable to attend the meeting due to a prior commitment.

### **3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

### **4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27TH MAY 2010**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2010 be confirmed.

#### **Matters Arising :**

Item 8) It was noted that the "Reporting and Evaluating Tool Kit" was still awaited.

## **5 ORAL UPDATE & PUBLICATIONS**

### **a) Agreed Syllabus - Update**

The RE Adviser informed the meeting that Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) had published a report in June 2010 entitled "Transforming Religious Education". The report evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of religious education in primary and secondary schools, and was based on evidence from visits to 94 primary and 89 secondary schools in England between 2006 and 2009. The RE Adviser remarked that the number of schools inspected represented only half a percent of the number of schools in the country and only two schools in the Greater London area had been included. The RE Adviser gave a presentation to the meeting of the key messages outlined in the report (*Appendix 1*).

The RE Adviser reported that a number of Local Authority RE Advisers were looking at a revised RE syllabus across the country and 42 different local authorities were involved. They were not looking at a national syllabus but at something which had national base with local arrangements. The Bromley SACRE RE Adviser informed the meeting that she had joined the group on behalf of the three SACREs she represented, so that she could keep abreast of what was happening. Members of the group involved Alan Brine (Ofsted Specialist RE Adviser) and Mark Chater (QCDA RE Consultant). The next meeting of the group was due to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2010.

Following a general discussion the Chairman suggested that the RE Adviser give an update on the work of the group at the next SACRE meeting, and consideration be given as to how this might affect the future agreed syllabus conference.

### **b) Report of London SACRE AGM**

The Chairman, RE Adviser, Councillor Manning and Mr Mahmood had attended the annual meeting of the London and South-East SACREs held at Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2010. The RE Adviser had spoken on the 6<sup>th</sup> Form Event and a lot of enquiries were received asking how the event had been set up. Mr Mahmood had also spoken about the Islamic competition. The Chairman made the comment that Bromley SACRE was regarded as a "keen and enthusiastic".

### **c) Islamic competition 2010**

Mr Mahmood confirmed that this event would take place at Darul Uloom on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2010 between 7-9pm. If Members of SACRE wished to attend they were asked to notify Mr Mahmood at least one week before in order to assist with catering. There was a "modesty" dress code and ladies were asked to wear a head covering. The Chairman asked if it might be worthwhile inviting local church ministers to attend. Mr Mahmood said that he would email details to the Chairman for him to pass these on.

**d) Youth SACRE**

The RE Adviser informed SACRE members that so far there had been one meeting of the Youth SACRE during the Autumn Term and the next meeting was due to be held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2010. Rae Michaelis, the Jewish Representative on SACRE had agreed to attend the meeting with the RE Adviser as she was keen to talk to the Youth SACRE.

On 17<sup>th</sup> November 2010 some children from Coopers School and some of the Youth SACRE were going to attend the synagogue in Highland Road, Bromley. They were going to film an interview with Rabbi Tony Hammond and make a film showing a “virtual tour” of the synagogue. It was hoped that a similar exercise would be carried out at Bromley Parish Church on another day and that the films would be a useful learning resource for others.

Mr Mahmood asked if the SACRE website was yet in existence and was told by the RE Adviser that there was a page for Bromley SACRE on the internet Managed Learning Environment ‘Fronter’. The RE Adviser confirmed that access to ‘Fronter’ was restricted to schools in the borough who had bought into the system and there were different levels of access. SACRE Members agreed that the RE Adviser could pass on their email addresses to the IT officer concerned, so that they could be issued with a password in order for them to access the SACRE page on ‘Fronter’.

**e) Philosophy Dissertation**

A Masters dissertation by Jed Stone (SACRE Teacher representative from Bullers Wood School) had previously been circulated to SACRE Members, who had been invited to give him feedback if they so wished. Jed Stone spoke at the SACRE meeting and outlined the content of the dissertation entitled “Philosophical Enquiry in Religious Education: Pupil Perspectives”. The research undertook to answer the question of whether Philosophy for Children should be used in religious education. Philosophy for Children is an enquiry driven way of learning and encouraged pupils to be thinkers rather than rote learners.

The Chairman advised SACRE Members that any questions or comments on the dissertation should be referred direct to Jed Stone.

**6 SACRE MEMBERS TRAINING**

**Report No. DCYP10140**

NASACRE had produced training materials in the form of a CDROM for individual SACREs following a very successful national training programme. The training materials would help towards Bromley SACRE achieving advanced SACRE status. A document outlining the statutory work of a SACRE and other information on SACREs had been circulated to Members.

SACRE Members present at the meeting took part in a training exercise organised by the RE Adviser, in response to the question “What should a good SACRE be doing?” The RE Adviser gave each of the four groups (ie: elected councillors, representatives of the Church of England, representatives of other religions and teacher representatives) a list of 24 statements relating to SACRE activities. The groups were asked to consider how they would rate each of the activities and agree on ranking for them, the most important first, and the least significant last, discarding any that they thought were inappropriate.

Following the exercise discussion took place on some of the responses given by the groups. The RE Adviser informed SACRE Members that she would analyse the responses and the results would be circulated with the draft minutes of the meeting (*Appendix 2*).

**RESOLVED that the training materials on improving the role of Bromley SACRE be adopted.**

## **7 CELEBRATING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MONTH**

### **Report No. DCYP10139**

In order to highlight the importance of Religious Education in Schools there would be a national month of Celebration in March 2011. A “flyer” advertising the event had been circulated to SACRE Members.

The RE Adviser showed SACRE Members the website which had been set up for this purpose (<http://www.recelebration.org.uk/>). The website contained a range of ideas for classroom activities with downloadable materials. There were also ideas for SACREs, and Members could sign up to the website to receive updates on activities and events which were taking place. Schools were being encouraged to celebrate and the website had competitions with prizes for Infant, Junior, Primary and Secondary Schools. The RE Adviser commented that unfortunately there was no provision for older children as the website related to activities involving children up to the age of 16 years.

Jan Thompson commented that during Celebrating RE Month, Bishop Justus, Church of England Secondary School was planning an event to bring together their Year 7 students with Year 6 pupils from Bromley’s C of E primary schools to showcase curriculum RE on the theme of Easter. She agreed to send details of the event to the RE Adviser.

**RESOLVED that Members visit the Celebrating RE Website and consider what Bromley SACRE might do to help ‘Celebrate RE’, with the matter being discussed at the next meeting.**

## **8 BROMLEY SACRE ANNUAL EVENT 2010**

### **Report No. DCYP10142**

At the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2010 it was noted that further discussions would take place regarding the Bromley SACRE Annual Event. The RE Adviser informed SACRE Members that it had been decided to organise a twilight session on Philosophy for Children. The event would take place at the Education Development Centre on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2010 between 4.30pm – 6pm. The session would be led by Jed Stone, SACRE teacher representative from Bullers Wood Secondary School.

**RESOLVED that the arrangements for the SACRE Annual Event be noted.**

## **9 SACRE FAITH DIRECTORY FOR SCHOOLS**

### **Report No. DCYP10143**

Bromley SACRE now had a page on the internet Managed Learning Environment 'Fronter' which was available at a charge to Bromley schools. (It was not known at present how many schools had taken this up.)

The information on faith speakers and visitors to schools had been collected and discussed over the last year and all those who had volunteered to go into schools would be contacted by the SACRE representative of their faith to check their continued willingness to participate. They would be given training/guidelines for protocol in schools by the RE consultant, Penny Smith-Orr. The information would then be uploaded onto the SACRE section of Fronter so that teachers can access it and make their own arrangements for speakers. Schools which do not buy into the Fronter system would be encouraged to contact the RE Adviser for a list of speakers.

The Chairman suggested that the SACRE website page and faith directory be revisited once a year to ensure that it was up to date and asked that this item be put on the SACRE forward work programme, to be discussed at the meeting in the Summer Term.

**RESOLVED that the information regarding the SACRE faith directory and webpage be noted and the matter receive further consideration at the meeting to be held in the Summer Term 2011.**

## **10 SACRE VISITS TO SCHOOLS**

### **Report No. DCYP10141**

The RE Adviser reported on the successful visits to Bullers Wood and Hayes Secondary Schools during the Summer Term 2010. The RE Adviser and Rev Michael Camp attended the visit to Bullers Wood School and the Chairman, RE Adviser and Councillor Mrs Manning attended the visit to Hayes School. The RE Adviser commented on the excellent and enjoyable visits which had taken place.

It was noted that no arrangements had yet been made for visits during the Autumn Term, but it was hoped that visits to Kemnal Technology College and Hillside School could be organised. The RE Adviser would email SACRE Members when the necessary arrangements had been made to see if they would be available to accompany her on the visits.

**RESOLVED that the reports of the school visits be noted.**

## **11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman suggested that at the next meeting consideration could be given to the idea of inviting guests to attend the Summer Term meeting of SACRE. He thought it might be useful for Members to invite someone from their faith group/teachers group to find out more about the role of Bromley SACRE.

**RESOLVED that members could consider who they might invite to the summer SACRE meeting being held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2011.**

## **12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2011 at 6.30pm.

The Meeting ended at 8.40 pm

Chairman

## Transforming RE

Syllabus design?

### **Key messages of Transforming RE**

- Teachers lack clarity about the subject undermining effective planning
- This is exposed by, for example:
- Over-dependence of primary teachers on published schemes of work – they can't plan independently
- Confusion at Key Stage 3 once 'new' models of curriculum disturbed traditional ways of planning
- Lack of continuity between KS3 and short course GCSE provision

## Confusion about what....?

- Core purpose of RE
- How to define attainment and progress
- The place of concepts and questions in RE
- How to secure continuity and progression
- How to structure a clear process of learning into RE topics
- The place of genuine openness and critical enquiry into religion

- An AS needs to answer three questions:
- What is characteristic pattern of learning in RE? – the learning process
- What do we need to cover? – breadth of study
- How do we understand the way pupils make progress in RE? – the definition of attainment and progress
- To be effective these must be planned as a coherent whole with each component flowing from the others



## Why enquiry?

- Basing RE on the principle of enquiry can:
- provide a clear, flexible framework for structuring and sequencing learning
- promote challenge and the active involvement of pupils in their learning
- allow for an RE which starts from and develops pupils' questions
- incorporate exploration of controversy
- focus assessment on skills and understanding rather than content

## Findings of OFSTED

- – inspectors found that planning RE around a clear process of enquiry was NOT the norm.
- Too often RE was either:
  - Collecting 'stuff'
  - Some form of semi-confessionalism

## Warnings

- In using the notion of enquiry we need to:
- avoid imposing too narrow a concept of enquiry
- allow for a wide variety of imaginative approaches to enquiry
- ensure we do not neglect the contribution of RE to pupils' personal development

## What we Need

- These are the skills that children need to learn to make progress:
- identify questions and define enquiries
- carry out and develop enquiries presenting findings, suggest interpretations, express ideas and feelings and develop arguments etc
- use empathy, critical thought and reflection to evaluate their learning and how it might apply to their own and others' lives.

# Minute Annex

## Appendix 2

### Bromley Training Activity 1 What should a good SACRE be doing?

#### Statements we looked at were;

#### A SACRE Should.....

- 1 monitor and praise schools' achievement.
- 2 provide high quality training for teaching staff and SACRE members.
- 3 gather information on provision and standards by questionnaire and/or professional support.
- 4 write guidance for schools and parents on specific issues, e.g. Right of withdrawal or observing a religious festival.
- 5 exemplify standards in RE by publishing pupils' work online or in a portfolio.
- 6 listen to teachers and invite them to report on good practice from the classroom.
- 7 publicise its work by, eg: organising a competition to engage pupils' interest in RE.
- 8 contribute to interfaith work in the area.
- 9 showcase pupils' work in RE by, eg: facilitating an exhibition.
- 10 encourage faith communities to host SACRE meetings.
- 11 set up an annual lecture for all those interested in faith and RE.
- 12 use RE advisers and consultants to brief and support SACRE.
- 13 support a working party of teachers on a key topic, e.g. RE assessment, RE and citizenship.
- 14 seek to develop the role and influence of the SACRE every year by auditing the effectiveness of its work.
- 15 meet in schools.
- 16 monitor examination results in RE.
- 17 look regularly at examples of pupils' work.
- 18 monitor the effectiveness of its agreed syllabus.
- 19 alert the LA to the need to review its agreed syllabus.
- 20 be a talking shop.
- 21 meet regularly in its constituent groups.
- 22 produce an annual report every year.
- 23 encourage all its members to observe an RE lesson.
- 24 advertise its meetings

#### What the groups thought;

Group	A other faiths	B C of E	C Teachers	D councillors
<b>Essential</b>	1.6.12.19.21.22.	3.7.12.14.16. 18.19,22.24.	6.7.8.18. 19.23	12.16.18.19.22.24
<b>Highly Important</b>	7.8.14.18.	1.4.8.23	12	1.2.3.4.6.8.9.11
<b>Quite important</b>	3..9.10.11.16.23.	5.6.9.11	1.3.13.16.24	5.21
<b>Nice in ideal world</b>	13.17.2.5	10.13.15.17	2.5.9.10	7.15.17.23
<b>Least important</b>	4.15.24	21	11.14.17. 21.22	20
<b>Inappropriate</b>	21	2.20	15.20	6

This training exercise should help SACRE to plan for the future and can be the starting point for discussion. To start with it is quite interesting to find the difference in priorities between the four groups, it would have been ideal if we had all had the same priority however the set of statements which were deemed essential or highly important by at least three groups were;

*1 monitor and praise schools' achievement. 6 listen to teachers and invite them to report on good practice from the classroom. 7 publicise its work by, eg: organising a competition to engage pupils' interest in RE. 8 contribute to interfaith work in the area. use RE advisers and consultants to brief and support SACRE. 18 monitor the effectiveness of its agreed syllabus. 19 alert the LA to the need to review its agreed syllabus. 22 produce an annual report every year.*

Statements which two groups gave high priority to were;

*3 gather information on provision and standards by questionnaire and/or professional support. 4 write guidance for schools and parents on specific issues, e.g. Right of withdrawal or observing a religious festival. 14 seek to develop the role and influence of the SACRE every year by auditing the effectiveness of its work. 16 monitor examination results in RE. 22 produce an annual report every year. 24 advertise its meetings*

Therefore members would seem to want to focus their concentration on these aspects, some of them are the legal requirements of a SACRE anyway as outlined in the document papers that precede this exercise. In order to fulfil what a SACRE must do i.e. *In relation to RE, a SACRE must: advise the local authority (LA) on religious education given in accordance with the agreed syllabus, and on matters to do with RE as the SACRE sees fit or in response to those issues that might be referred to the SACRE by the LA.* Therefore surely, a SACRE should: *monitor the provision and quality of agreed syllabus RE and the effectiveness of the syllabus itself; provide advice and support on teaching agreed syllabus RE; consider whether changes need to be made to the agreed syllabus; offer advice to the LA, and through the LA to its schools, concerning how an existing agreed syllabus can be interpreted so as to fit in with a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum.* Otherwise the knowledge base of the SACRE members would not be good enough to fulfil its duties.

The two categories of **least important and discarded as inappropriate** included statements 4, 6, 14, 22, 24 which were also among those deemed most important. A SACRE must by law produce an annual report (22) the meetings should also be advertised (24) as they are open to the public scrutiny. Bromley SACRE has produced guidance documents (4). It is important to do these things and also surely it is very important to try to do number 6 which is listening to teachers so that we can do the work of SACRE. In our feedback discussion we wondered if 14 was of benefit to the pupils and also wondered how this could be achieved. Perhaps we should think further about this statement.

'Meet regularly in constituent groups' and 'provide high quality training' did not come very high in the ranking but I consider that some training of members is important and to do this we will need to be in our groups. This will help with the development towards Bromley SACRE becoming an advanced SACRE. Of the other statements that were in the middle two categories sometimes it helps a SACRE to meet in a school to see the RE work and get feedback from teachers. Also meeting in a faith community premises can also show members what is similar and different about each other.

Penny Smith-Orr  
December 2010