

MINUTES

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education Meeting - 14 November 2011

Present: **Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf**

Diana Cutler, Paul Lewis, Jane Essex, G Devadason, Liz O'Brien, Muhammad Parekh, Peter Davies, Veronica Downes, Liz Staples and Liz Williams

Apologies for absence: Ann Hewetson, Christine Chadwick, Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal, Karen Knobbs, Sam Phillips, Sue Blackmore, Mary Gale, Colin Hopkins, Rosemary Woodward, Dave Lyons, Terry Finn, Ivan Jennings, Tricia Budd, Frankie Durairatnam and Rev. J. Kime

Also in attendance - Emma Senior

PART ONE

12. Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

Mr P. Davies proposed and Ms Liz O'Brien seconded, that Rev Preb Michael Metcalf be nominated as Chairman for the ensuing year.

Due to a number of members being absent from the meeting it was proposed that the election of the Vice-Chairman be deferred until the next SACRE meeting.

There being no other nominations it was:

RESOLVED – That Rev Preb Michael Metcalf be elected as Chairman for the ensuing year.

13. Welcome to New Members

The Chairman welcomed Sonia Andjelkovic, Diana Cutler and Paul Lewis who were new members to the SACRE.

14. Minutes of the SACRE Meeting held on 17 June 2011

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

15. Update on Key Issues

SACRE received an update on key issues that had developed or arisen since their last meeting. The issues included:

- i. The Student Council for Religious Education;

- ii. Recruitment and retention of teachers of RE;
- iii. The Farmington Fellowship (members asked that both Bev Young and Jerome Peat be asked to present their work to the SACRE once it had been completed);
- iv. SHAP calendar and resources;
- v. The SACRE lecture (Members who had attended this years lecture reported that it had been very enjoyable and informative);
- vi. Subject focused RE inspections; and,
- vii. Schools causing concern.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

16. NASACRE Update

The Chairman gave an oral update on recent NASACRE developments, including:

- i. NASACRE remained concerned about the introduction of the EBacc and the impact this may have as RE was not included within it. NASACRE continued working to address this issue;
- ii. Concerns were expressed over the primary and secondary curriculum reviews and the fact that RE had been excluded from these so far. There appeared to be a much more limited view of education from Central Government based on core skills and knowledge;
- iii. NASACRE was currently involved in drawing up a revised SACRE evaluation tool kit which SACREs may wish to use, with one of the revisions referring to academies and whether they should be a part of the SACRE structure;
- iv. NASACRE continued to work on the issue of collective worship and in particular the withdrawal of circular 194, however Central Government seemed reluctant to discuss this at present; and,
- v. Discussions were currently taking place on whether regional SACRE and AREIAC conferences could be introduced.

RESOLVED – That the Oral report be noted.

17. The British Humanist Association

SACRE received a copy of correspondence received from Mr Richy Thompson, Campaigns Officer for the British Humanist Association (BHA). The Association requested that the Staffordshire SACRE grant full membership to a humanist representative onto Committee A of the SACRE. Staffordshire SACRE had had a co-opted humanist representative attending their meetings since March 2002.

Members had a detailed debate on this issue and were aware that legally SACREs could now include a Humanists representative on Committee A if they wished, but they were not obliged to do so. Membership of Committee A was agreed locally and should ensure that it was reflective of the principle religious traditions of the area. SACRE was not aware of any large humanist presence within Staffordshire and felt that unless such a presence existed it would not be appropriate to include a Humanist member onto Committee A.

Members asked that a report be brought to the next SACRE meeting detailing the extent of Humanist representation in Staffordshire.

RESOLVED – That a report on the extent of Humanist representation in Staffordshire be brought to the next meeting of SACRE.

18. SACRE Annual Report 2010-2011

Members received a copy of the SACRE Annual report for 2010-2011 for their consideration. Members discussed the range of professional development offered to teachers and in particular the reduction in the network meetings, specifically for teachers of Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils.

Members suggested that electronic copies of the report be sent out but that a summary be sent to headteachers with links to the full document, to make the report more user friendly.

SACRE was asked to consider the report and contact the Senior Advisor for RE by the end of next week if they had any comments.

RESOLVED – That members contact the Senior Advisor for RE with any comments on the annual report by Friday 25 November 2011, and that the report then be amended as appropriate and circulated to all stakeholders.

19. Application for Variation of Practice

Members were aware that SACRE had the authority to determine any application for variation of practice from the requirement for broadly Christian collective worship and/or make amendment to the way the Agreed Syllabus was followed within a school.

Members were informed that no applications had been received.

SACRE were informed that a group of secularist peers had tabled amendments to the Education Bill at the committee stage of the House of Lords seeking to end the statutory status of collective worship and religious education within schools without a religious designation. The amendments had been debated before being withdrawn by the sponsors. The RE Council and NASACRE had clarified their position on collective worship and members received details of the statements made.

RESOLVED – That the new developments in this area be noted.

20. SACRE www.sln2.net Login Codes

At their meeting of 17 June 2011 members received a briefing on the sln2 Staffordshire learning platform and made a request that the possibility of developing a SACRE member page be investigated. The facility was now available for SACRE members to access sln2 via an individual password login and details of how to use the site were explained.

RESOLVED – That the sln2 developments be noted.

21. Monitoring of Primary School Provision 2010-2011

Monitoring questionnaires had been the main source of information since 2005 on the provision of RE in Staffordshire schools. This information had been used by SACRE to help with their monitoring duties on the provision of RE.

In a change to the previous system the questionnaires had been included on sIn2 with schools completing the questionnaires on line and details of the responses received were shared with SACRE.

RESOLVED – That the 2011 findings from the primary monitoring questionnaires be noted.

22. Explore Islam and Interfaith Week November 20 - 26th

SACRE received details of the Explore Islam week scheduled for 14-18 November and the Interfaith week on 20-16 November.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

23. The SACRE Budget 2011-2012

SACRE members received details of the SACRE budget for 2011-2012 giving a breakdown of how the funding had been spent. Members discussed a number of possible uses for the remaining funding, including opportunities to target those teachers who were not able, or had not previously accessed professional development.

After clarification on outstanding expenditure for the Senior Adviser for RE it was proposed that the Adviser in consultation with the Chairman be given discretion to allocate the remaining funding appropriately.

RESOLVED – That the Senior Adviser for RE in consultation with the Chairman have the discretion to allocate the remaining budget appropriately.

24. Any Other Business

- a) Members were informed that Frankie Durairatnam was currently in Stafford Hospital and had been very unwell. Members asked that a card wishing him a speedy recovery be sent from the SACRE.
- b) Liz O'Brien informed members that the Birmingham Diocese had amalgamated the Department of Religious Education and the Catholic School Commission into one new department called the Diocesan Education Service.
- c) Members were updated on progress with the NASACRE award to produce teaching materials based around the National Memorial Arboretum.
- d) Due to increasing heating costs Paul Lewis informed members that a donation was sought from those schools visiting the Synagogue. To avoid the discomfort of requesting a donation during the visit, teachers would be made aware of this request on the sIn2 site.

25. Date of the next SACRE meeting

RESOLVED – That the next SACRE meeting be held on Tuesday 7 February 2012, 2.00 pm, Kingston Centre, Stafford.

**Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf
Chairman**

Documents referred to in these minutes as Schedules are not appended, but will be attached to the signed copy of the Minutes of the meeting. Copies, or specific information contained in them, may be available on request.