

MINUTES

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education Meeting - 8 July 2015

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

Susan Devereux, Sonia Andjelkovic, Ann Hewetson, G Devadason, Dr Laow Panyasiri, Muhammad Parekh, Sam Phillips, Sue Blackmore, Rosemary Woodward, Peter Davies, David Williams, Caroline Wood and Ian Lawson

Apologies for absence: Sam Kirwan, Julie Thompson, Mick Dwyer, Diana Cutler, Paul Lewis, Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal, Colin Hopkins, Terry Finn, Bill Walley and Paul Moseley

Also in attendance - Helen Phillips and Mary Gale

PART ONE

1. Welcome to New Members

The Chairman welcomed Ian Lawson who replaces Conor Wileman on Committee D. The Chairman also informed Members that Paul Moseley was the new Humanist representative on the SACRE, and Julie Thompson was the Baha'i co-opted representative, although they were unable to attend this meeting.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2015

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 9 February 2015 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

3. An Update on Key Issues

SACRE received an update on key issues that had occurred since their last meeting' including:

- a) Cover for RE consultant to Staffordshire SACRE: Mary Gale, previous SACRE member, is covering Emma Jardine's maternity leave, which commenced in April. Congratulations to Emma and her family whose daughter Mia was born on 20 April;
- b) Guidance on promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools: following AREIAC and Entrust training on fundamental British values and SMSC in schools Mary Gale has continued to share guidance with schools/governors;
- c) Two briefing papers based on the work of the All Party Parliamentary Group had been shared with governors. The papers confirmed there was no legal requirement for Governors to review RE in schools or for schools to undertake the recommendations but that schools had a legal responsibility to provide RE. In the next school survey on RE and collective worship schools will be asked when they last reviewed their RE as per the SACRE recommendations in 2014;

- d) SACRE lecture: Entrust had agreed to sponsor this years SACRE lecture on the condition that promotional material would be made available at the event for their forthcoming courses. The arrangements for this event were yet to be confirmed but Members suggested an October or early November date for the event would be preferable; and,
- e) Further good news story: following the spirited arts course led by Emma Jardine a variety of schools have embarked on spirited arts projects throughout the term, which has been evidenced through link governor reports.

RESOLVED – That the update on key issues be noted and the SACRE lecture be arranged for an October or early November twilight session.

4. Agreed Syllabus Conference

SACRE noted the minutes of the Agreed Syllabus Conference held on 9 February 2015.

It was proposed that SACRE convene a meeting of their Agreed Syllabus Conference.

RESOLVED – That SACRE convene the second meeting of their Agreed Syllabus Conference.

[Note by Clerk: The SACRE meeting was formally closed whilst the Agreed Syllabus Conference was convened. Once the Agreed Syllabus Conference had concluded the SACRE meeting formally re-opened.]

5. NASACRE Update

The Chairman gave an update on recent NASACRE events, including:

- During April this year a number of NASACRE representatives were part of a visit to Bosnia and Sarajevo remembering the Srebrenica genocide. The Chairman shared his experiences from the trip, including the international missing persons initiative which aimed to identify the many un-named bodies found following the genocide. The purpose of the visit was to try and learn from this tragedy and to make a commitment to share the experience with others. Teaching materials were being produced for use in schools and would be available shortly;
- The NASACRE AGM had been very successful. Charles Clarke had been an inspirational visiting speaker. He had jointly produced (with Linda Woodhead) a document entitled “A new settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools” which considered a new structure for RE and collective worship in schools, a copy of this very interesting document would be forwarded to SACRE Members after the meeting; and,
- NASACRE was part of the Interfaith network which was currently looking at the diverse range of religious presence and considering accepting more than the nine recognised religious groups.

RESOLVED – That the oral update by the Chairman be noted and that a copy of the Charles Clarke, Linda Woodhead document “A new settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools” be forwarded to SACRE members.

6. Application for Variation of Practice

There were none on this occasion.

7. SACRE Budget 2014-2015 end of year Current Budget 2015-2016

SACRE received an end of year budget breakdown for 2014-15 and details of their current budget for the financial year 2015-16.

The 2015-16 budget would continue to be monitored in terms of the number of days that the RE consultant was permitted to support the SACRE.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

8. Monitoring Provision

Members received details of survey results on monitoring of provision in schools during 2014-15. Staffordshire schools were invited to respond to SACRE monitoring surveys via the E Newsletter, with the on-line survey undertaken via Survey Monkey.

The number of primary schools who had taken part in the collective worship survey was disappointing, however there had been a better response to the primary RE provision survey, in line with the numbers who responded last year.

The secondary school participation numbers were disappointing for both collective worship and secondary RE provision.

Overall responses showed a similar picture to last year. Members were aware that in next years survey schools will be asked when they last reviewed their RE syllabus.

It was also proposed that for next years survey Governors are encouraged to check whether their schools have completed and returned the survey.

SACRE were also informed that Voluntary Controlled or Voluntary Aided schools have a SIAMs inspection. This is on top of the usual Ofsted inspections. SIAMs is the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The inspections consider the work of the school, including its RE, and the faith ethos within which the school operates. SACRE noted with pleasure that 5 out of the 6 SIAMs inspections that had taken place within Staffordshire this academic year had been very positive.

RESOLVED – That SACRE note the results of the monitoring provision surveys for RE and collective worship in schools.

9. Suggestions for SACREs to consider

Throughout the 2015 NASACRE conference, keynote speakers and NASACRE Executive Committee members made a number of suggestions that SACRE's may consider adopting in their meetings. Members received details of 21 suggestions and

within small groups considered those which they felt were a priority for the Staffordshire SACRE.

All three groups considered engaging governors as a priority. Two groups considered the following two issues as a priority:

- Celebrate good practice and encourage the use of high quality resources
- Reflect on the British values agenda

One group each put the following as a priority:

- Take a note of the information in the booklet “A new settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools”
- Consider what are the successful ways in which you engage with local schools, including academies, to support their RE
- How do you raise the profile of RE with local partners and communities
- How do you know what schools are providing in RE when there is now such a range of types of school
- Engage with teachers in working parties when developing a locally agreed syllabus. Process is important not just the end product and this involves and develops teachers.

Members discussed the British values agenda, with some concern expressed at the possibility of this being too nationalistic. They were aware that this was part of an underlying agenda for people to identify as British but felt that these values were international. SACRE will wish to hear from schools in the future on how this agenda develops. It was suggested that schools are asked to identify how this agenda is working as part of the monitoring survey next year. SACRE also noted the RE Today document on British Values and asked that the possibility of getting a copy of the document for all Staffordshire schools be explored.

RESOLVED – That: a) the priority areas for SACRE to consider be noted for future development; and
b) the possibility of getting a copy of the RE Today “British Values” document for all Staffordshire schools be explored.

10. AOB

Members received a copy of the House of Commons Briefing paper no. 07167, Religious Education in schools.

A Friends of Faith Festival of Peace will be held in Stafford on 16 November.

Dr Loaw Panyasiri informed SACRE Members of a faith forum festival on 16 August and a children’s day on 23 August at the Buddhist Temple in Kings Bromley, everybody would be welcome.

Concerns were shared over the new GCSE RE syllabi which were not yet available. There was frustration amongst many teachers as they worked towards the GCSE from Y9 and therefore this delay would impact on their examination students. It was agreed that Staffordshire SACRE write to the examination boards registering their concerns.

11. Date of next meeting

RESOLVED – That the next SACRE meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 11 November 2015, 2.00pm, Entrust HQ, Riverway, 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.