

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

6 June 2017

PRESENT: Richard Kellaway, Anne Andrews, Michael Gammage, Karen Butler, Hilary Harris, Barbara Meaney, Ila Gangotra, Ravinder Singh Zandu, Deborah Firth, Ceri Neil and Sally Lynch.

Officers in attendance: Andy Carswell

ACTION

1 Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced a new member, Sally Lynch. The Chairman explained that she would be replacing Joan Hicks, who was resigning and was unable to attend the meeting. The Chairman thanked Joan Hicks for her service on the SACRE Panel.

2 Collective Worship

ORDER OF BUSINESS

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the order of business as detailed in the agenda, be amended.

The Chairman reminded members that the RE Toolkit had been covered in detail at the last meeting, with the exception of the section relating to Collective Worship. Members were reminded that part of SACRE's role was to support the provision of Collective Worship in schools, and where necessary to respond to requests for determinations. There was an acceptance amongst members that Collective Worship had not been discussed much by SACRE in recent times and that members were not fully aware of all of the issues affecting schools in relation to Collective Worship.

Anne Andrews informed members that, although she often attended schools for networking meetings with RE subject leaders, she was not be able to provide advice on Collective Worship during the course of those meetings; that would have to be done separately on a one-to-one basis with the subject leader. This was because the networking meetings were separate from her role with SACRE, and because some of the schools she visited did not come under SACRE's remit.

In relation to Key Area 3a mentioned in the Toolkit, members felt that the SACRE could be considered as being above 'Developing' but had not reached the level of practice to consider itself as 'Established' and the SACRE should be considered a borderline between the two. It was felt that issues relating to supporting pupil entitlement had not been discussed much and had been neglected, and that more resources should be put into supporting this. However it was felt that the debate in relation to this point had been a useful exercise.

In relation to Key Area 3b, after some discussion members agreed that the SACRE should be considered as having 'Developing' practice regarding enhancing the quality of provision of collective worship.

In relation to Key Area 3c, members noted that the SACRE had only ever received one request to deal with a determination. There had also been very little by way of training and as a result it was agreed that the SACRE should be considered as 'Developing' in terms of responding to requests for determinations.

With regards to areas for development, Anne Andrews stated that in her role as advisor to Bracknell Forest Council she had searched the websites of all schools for their Collective Worship policy and arranged for the Local Authority to contact all the schools that did not have their policy publicly available. She said this raised the profile of Collective Worship and made schools aware of it. The Chairman said SACRE should focus its attention on identifying which schools that it had responsibility for and ask about their Collective Worship policy, in order to work out what steps should be taken next. Members agreed to review this against the guidelines relating to types of schools included in the NASACRE Handbook.

Members also reviewed a sample policy and guide to Collective Worship, along with draft copies of forms for applying for a determination and a review of that determination. After some discussion it was agreed to defer the item to the next meeting for further debate.

Action: An item on Collective Worship to be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

Action: Details of which categories outlined in the NASACRE Handbook schools within the Royal Borough fitted into, and, as far as possible, for information on their Collective Worship policies, to be sought from the Local Authority Officer.

3 Apologies For Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Airey, Cllr Majeed, Joan Hicks, Clive Haines and Liz Jenkins.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Minutes of Meeting on March 13th

The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record, save for the final sentence on the minute relating to the NASACRE Big Survey being amended to 'Members felt it would be more productive if SACRE members were to visit a school to observe teaching and learning in RE and Collective Worship, and provide feedback at the next meeting'.

Members discussed the actions arising from the previous meeting.

| Action | Responsibility | Progress |
|---|---------------------------|-----------|
| Arrangements to be made to identify two new members | Anne Andrews/Joan Hicks | Completed |
| Response to NASACRE Big Survey to be sent | Anne Andrews | Completed |
| School visit to be arranged and members | Karen Butler/Louise Ceska | Completed |

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| to receive update | | |
| Details of member training session to be circulated | Andy Carswell | Completed |
| Item on Collective Worship to be included on next agenda | Andy Carswell | Completed |
| Desborough College, Windsor Boys' and Windsor Girls' Schools to be contacted about RE teaching provision | Anne Andrews | Completed |
| Exam results to be removed from Annual Report | Anne Andrews | Completed |

6 Membership Update

The clerk informed members that Liz Jenkins had resigned from her position on SACRE the day before the meeting. The clerk stated that Anthea West had suggested avenues to pursue in terms of seeking a replacement Buddhist member; however a replacement had not yet been found.

It was noted that a change to the SACRE Constitution was needed as two of the teaching unions that were represented were due to merge in time for the next school year. After some discussion members agreed that the six teaching representatives on SACRE should come from each of the four Key Stages, along with a headteacher and a representative from an Academy. It was felt that taking this course of action would make it easier to fill the vacancies. The clerk informed members that any changes to the SACRE Constitution would need to be agreed at a meeting of the full Council. It was agreed that a change to the Constitution should be investigated, and if possible to be implemented in time for the next meeting.

Action: The clerk to enquire about amending the SACRE Constitution at a meeting of full Council at RBWM.

Cllr Kellaway and Sally Lynch left the meeting at 6.55pm.

7 Syllabus Review

It was agreed that all members of the SACRE would become members of the Agreed Syllabus Review Conference. However the teaching representatives said they had not seen any email correspondence relating to feedback of the Syllabus survey. It was noted that feedback from teachers needed to be submitted by July 21st. The response to a separate SACRE questionnaire had been agreed at the Hub meeting, when three SACRE members had been present along with Jan Lever. Members were informed that the results of the survey were to be confirmed at the next Hub meeting on September 12th. Members were informed that an additional meeting would take place in May 2018 to agree and ratify the Syllabus in time for it to be introduced in July 2018, for implementation at the start of the 2018/19 academic year. It was anticipated that the main content of the Syllabus would not be radically altered as feedback on the current Syllabus had generally been positive.

Members said during discussions that they felt there was a lack of training available to teachers, leading to a lack of RE specialist teachers. It was also felt that if this issue was ignored by Ofsted, it sent out a message that RE was

not considered an important aspect of the curriculum.

Members were reminded that they were all welcome to attend the Hub meeting on September 12th. Members were also informed that a consultation event for members of religious groups was taking place on October 4th at Wokingham Borough Council. Full details of this had not yet been confirmed however.

Action: Anne Andrews to ask the Local Authority Officer if correspondence relating to the Syllabus survey had been circulated amongst teachers.

Action: Details of the Consultation event for religious groups to be confirmed and circulated to members.

8 Feedback from NASACRE Conference and AGM

Barbara Meaney provided members with an overview of the NASACRE AGM and Conference. The title of the Conference was 'Preparing for Life in Britain Today: The Contribution of RE'. The first speaker was Dr Joyce Miller, who discussed the several major reports to make up the RE Commission and spoke at length about the Commission on Religious Education, or CoRE. The second presentation was provided by Prof Aaquil Ahmed, whose talk was entitled 'Why Religious Literacy is Important for Community Cohesion'. The talk looked at how SACREs could help with community cohesion, such as sharing good practice, celebrating RE, creating strategies to support development of religious literacy across the whole teaching force, and using networks to support schools and religious communities.

9 Update on Crossing the Bridges project

Anne Andrews advised members that collating details for the Crossing the Bridges directory had now been completed and it was hoped that the full directory would be available before the end of the school term. Anne Andrews stated that she would be raising Crossing the Bridges at her next Subject Leader Team meeting in order to remind attendees of the value of children attending places of worship. She also stated that it was important not to lose the impetus from compiling the directory.

10 Feedback from SACRE Hub

Karen Butler informed members that the key updates on the project had been highlighted in the document circulated with the agenda, and that there were no further updates.

11 Feedback from SACRE training event

Anne Andrews informed members that the training event had looked at the role of a SACRE. She said around a dozen people from each of the six Berkshire SACREs had attended. The next training event was scheduled for September 12th and would focus on RE; the spring term training session would focus on a SACRE's responsibility regarding Collective Worship.

The Chairman asked if it would be possible for members to receive a brief training session at the next meeting. This was agreed, with members to decide what they wanted to receive training on.

Ila Gangotra asked if people's roles on SACRE could be clarified. Members were informed that this was included in the SACRE Handbook. It was agreed

to distribute the Handbook to all members.

Action: Members to receive a brief training session from Anne Andrews at the next meeting, on a topic to be agreed.

Action: The clerk to circulate the SACRE Handbook to all members.

12 Pan Berkshire Conference

Members were informed that the next Conference would take place on September 28th at the Holiday Inn at Winnersh Triangle, and that it was scheduled to take place from 6.30-9pm. Members were informed that the SACRE had a budget of £2,000 set aside for attendance at Conferences, and it was hoped as many members as possible would be able to attend.

13 Newlands School Visit

Karen Butler gave an overview to members about her visit to Newlands School. She explained that she saw parts of three lessons; two of which were Key Stage 3, the other was an A Level lesson. Karen Butler explained that she did not have the opportunity to witness any Collective Worship but had the opportunity to speak to the person responsible for it. She also spoke to the Head of RE and the headteacher at the end of the day.

Karen Butler explained that, in particular, she was looking for examples of learning objectives, with a focus on what the teachers were asking pupils and how they responded. She said the teachers encouraged and stressed the importance of independent thinking, and of paired thinking. She said the strengths of the school were the way pupils would be challenged in terms of questions and expected to collaborate with one another.

Karen Butler stated that she was very impressed with the Year 12 pupils, particularly their articulacy when discussing complex issues. It was also noted that the school had a 'thought for the week' that pupils abided by, and that youngsters would sometimes help with preparing and leading assemblies.

Karen Butler said the main priority for the school is to improve the quality of its teaching resources. It was explained that the number of available textbooks had decreased over time, meaning there weren't enough for pupils to take one home to complete homework assignments. The school was also working hard to increase the number of pupils that took RE at GCSE, as the school's exam results were among the best in the Royal Borough. Visits to places of worship were popular among staff and pupils, but additional funding was required in order to arrange these.

Karen Butler explained that she had filled out a form outlining what she had observed and said blank copies of this form could be made available to other members who wished to attend a school visit.

Deborah Firth asked members if anyone wanted to visit Boyne Hill School, adding that it would be possible to view a Collective Worship. It was agreed that Ceri Neil would attend at a date to be arranged, and her report to be circulated to members.

Action: Ceri Neil and Deborah Firth to arrange visit to Boyne Hill School, and the report to be sent to the clerk for distribution to all members.

14 Any Other Business

Hilary Harris raised concerns that some schools had recently been left disappointed with the quality of visits from a representative of the Jewish community, and that the schools had been charged for the visits. She said that representatives from Maidenhead Synagogue would provide school visits for free and there should not be an expectation that schools should have to pay to receive a visitor. Hilary Harris raised concerns that these recent complaints could undermine the work put into collating the Crossing the Bridges directory.

Action: Anne Andrews to take the lead in investigating and/or passing on the concerns raised by Hilary Harris.

Action: Anne Andrews to consult with the Local Authority Officer regarding contacting subscribers to the SACRE Newsletter to note that SACRE cannot endorse any faith visitor, and that schools should exercise appropriate caution when inviting faith visitors; and that Maidenhead Synagogue can host school visits, and may provide school visitors, without charge.

15 Dates Of Future Meetings

The dates of the next two meetings were noted, with the venue confirmed as the Council Chamber.

The meeting, which began at 6.00 pm, ended at 8.17 pm

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