

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

4 March 2024

PRESENT: Karen Butler (Chair), Barbara Meaney (Vice-Chair), Thomas Kingsley-Jones, Matthew Scott, Shahnaz Din, Margaret Smith, Laura Dexter, Dai Prendiville, Michael Gammage, Rachel Beaumont, Anthony Lewis, and Councillor Coe.

Officers in attendance: Laurence Ellis, Clive Haines, Helen Mastrilli and Anne Andrews

SACRE MEETING

ACTION

1 Welcome

The Chair, Karen Butler (Church of England representative), welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly the new members of SACRE, and attendees introduced themselves.

Revd. David Saunders (Church of England representative) announced that the current meeting would be his last one due to moving to the Diocese of Truro. The Chair expressed her appreciation of his time and work given to SACRE.

Anne Andrews, SACRE Advisor, asked David Saunders to let her know if he knew of anyone who could replace him on SACRE; he agreed to do so.

2 RE at Desborough College

Following up from his pre-meeting tour, Dai Prendiville (KS2 Teacher representative) gave an overview of RE at Desborough College. Setting the context, he explained that Desborough College had stopped teaching RE for some considerable time before his arrival. When he had first started working there, he had been asked by the Headteacher to establish an RE Department.

Dai Prendiville said that he promoted the values of inclusion, respect, honesty, and reflectiveness when it came to teaching, relishing the academic aspect of RE and aiming for all students to thrive and succeed. He added that he was unafraid of learning together with the students when questions arose that he could not automatically answer, such as questions on Buddhism, a subject he had recently been teaching.

Dai Prendiville explained that he was the only RE teacher at Desborough College, which he believed gave him an advantage of knowing all the students and monitoring their development over time.

Dai Prendiville explained that he used quizzes with students to regularly 'data-track' them. He would do a baseline at the start of the unit and then another one at the end of the unit, using multiple choice questions and an end-of-unit test to track each student's progress based on their point score.

The RE model at Desborough College involved the study of Abrahamic religions in Year 7, Dharmic in Year 8 and Philosophy and Ethics in Year 9. This allowed students to consider philosophical questions from both a religious and non-religious perspective. He also enriched the curriculum by inviting the local vicar, Jeremy Harris, to visit assemblies and RE classes. 40-minute RE

slots were planned to be used during tutor registration times to explore concepts and ideas.

Dai Prendiville also informed that a student teacher had recently joined him in delivering RE, and an arrangement had been made whereby he and the student teacher divided the teaching of RE and PHSE between them (as he was also the head of PHSE). As a result, the quality of PHSE increased and another teacher became part of the growing RE Department. In addition, the student teacher had allowed Dai Prendiville to be more reflective of his own teaching style through the process of teaching in front of a colleague.

The Chair asked whether being the only RE teacher at Desborough College, while having its advantages as previously mentioned, also meant that it came with disadvantages. Dai Prendiville replied that RE was “pretty slick and relentless”, using his quiz system to keep track of students’ educational progress. The Chair followed up by asking if there was potential for the RE Department to expand. Dai Prendiville answered that this depended on the Headteacher, money and future planning. Nevertheless, there was an intention to do this.

Anne Andrews asked if any Christianity was taught in Year 8 alongside the Dharmic faiths. Dai Prendiville replied that it had been a challenge as a lot of content was being taught in Year 8, nevertheless he sought to insert lessons on Christianity in his classes. He added that the varying levels of knowledge about Christianity amongst his students also provided a challenge to fill some gaps.

The Chair asked about feedback from students on RE. Dai Prendiville replied that feedback from Parents’ Evenings and via Student Voice were highly positive, even with students who were not planning to take RE as part of their GCSEs.

When asked by the Chair about the intake from the 28 feeder schools, Dai Prendiville stated that the volume of students from each of these many schools was small (with 11 being the highest from a single school).

3 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Douglas, Ila Gangotra (Hindu representative), Vicci Davidson (Methodist representative), Karen Waller (Headteacher representative – Eton Wick CE First School), Ravinder Singh (Sikh representative), and Chris Sayers (Buddhist representative).

4 Minutes of Meeting on 4 December 2023 and Matters Arising

The Chair went through the matters arising in the previous meeting minutes:

- Laura Dexter (KS1 Teacher representative – Furze Platt Infant) had written the articles on trips to Maidenhead Mosque and Synagogue and the book donated by the Bahá’i Faith, which were then added to the newsletter of January 2024.
- Margaret Smith (Quaker representative) asked who received the newsletter, stating that she had not seen it; to which Anne Andrews replied that it was sent out to all schools and SACRE members. When asked by the Chair, some attendees said that they received it from the schools while others said they had not. The Chair asked for the email circulation to be

checked to ensure all SACRE members were included.

ACTION: Laurence Ellis to check to ensure that SACRE newsletters get sent out to members.

Laurence Ellis

- While the Chair had managed to fill some vacancies, more members had resigned and consequently opened up more vacancies.
The Chair to continue searching for potential candidates to fill the vacant SACRE positions.
- The Chair decided to defer discussion on an issue relating to the SACRE Development Plan due to the SACRE member who had raised it being absent.
- While the NASACRE Resources login details had been recirculated, Laurence Ellis, Democratic Services Officer (clerk), mentioned that the new members would have not received them.

Karen Butler

ACTION: Laurence Ellis to resend NASACRE login details to the new SACRE members.

Laurence Ellis

- Laurence Ellis confirmed that most members had consented to their email addresses being added to the email list with only one not giving their approval. The new members were not added to the list but they agreed to have their email addresses added.

ACTION: Laurence Ellis to add the new SACRE members to the member email list.

Laurence Ellis

- Anne Andrews confirmed that the invoice for the SACRE Hub subscription for 2023-24 had been paid at end of the financial year of 2023. There would be no invoice for 2024-25 because there was around £20,000 to cover the costs of the Agreed Syllabus review. As SACRE would not be undertaking any other projects, Anne Andrews intended to equally re-distribute the money left over after the Agreed Syllabus review to the six Berkshire SACREs.

At this stage, Anne Andrews revealed that she was intending to retire at Easter 2025. Because of this, SACRE needed to ensure that it spent the SACRE Hub budget as far as it was possible to do so.

- Regarding the RE scrapbook, Laura Dexter informed that she had it but did not want to supersede Dai Prendiville's presentation. The Chair suggested to bring the RE scrapbook along to the next meeting in June 2024.

ACTION: Laura Dexter to bring her RE scrapbook to the next SACRE meeting in June 2024.

Laura Dexter

- Shahnaz Din (from Lowbrook Academy) had replaced Clare Roberts as the Key Stage 2 Teacher representative.
- As the plan was to hold the next SACRE meeting at Eton Wick CE First School, the intention was for Karen Waller to do a presentation on *Space Makers* then.
- While the Chair declared that the main priority at the moment was the Agreed Syllabus, she nevertheless stressed the importance for SACRE to deliberate on increasing the budget to enable Anne Andrews, as the SACRE Advisor, to undertake monitoring visits to Borough schools alongside SACRE members. Explaining the context, Anne Andrews commented that other SACREs paid their advisors for half-a-day per week

or one day per week whereas she herself was only paid by RBWM for five-and-a-half days per year.

ACTION: At a future meeting, SACRE members to debate the possibility of increasing the budget to enable Anne Andrews to make monitoring visits to Borough schools alongside SACRE colleagues. ALL

- The weblink to the RE Hubs website had been shared in the minutes of the previous meeting (www.re-hubs.uk).
- The Chair reiterated that there needed to be a formal process for faith group representatives to visit schools, including enrolling on formal training, in contrast to the current *ad hoc* method. Anne Andrews recommended the RE Hub which offered free training. Councillor Coe suggested a webpage on the Council website which had links to the RE Hub as well as content, which Clive Haines stated could be possible. The Chair envisioned that members of SACRE faith groups should be the first point of contact for schools, enabling them – if suitably accredited – to do this themselves or to signpost to a colleague. Anne Andrews added that the training would give the individual an accreditation and enable them to be listed on the RE Hub website. It also provided some accountability and reassurance to schools that they would receive a trained person. The Chair suggested that she would investigate a simple policy related to training faith representatives and then present it to SACRE. In the meantime, she also suggested that SACRE members or anyone they knew from faith communities should undertake training from RE Hubs.
- The Chair was unable to schedule a time to share the three interviews about RE teaching from Laura Dexter, Barbara Meaney and Thomas Kingsley-Jones with SACRE members.

ACTION: Schedule a time to share the three interviews about RE teaching from Laura Dexter, Barbara Meaney and Thomas Kingsley-Jones with SACRE members. Karen Butler

- The 'Worldviews Exhibition' needed further discussion.
ACTION: Further discussion on a 'Worldviews Exhibition' to be held at some point. ALL
- Ila Gangotra (Hindu representative) had provided the contact details of the organisation to the Chair and Anne Andrews to help formulate/amend the teaching of Hinduism in the syllabus.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2023 were approved as a true and correct record. ALL

5 Membership Update

A representative of the Jewish faith had not yet been identified.

Three new SACRE members had been successfully recruited: Revd. Matthew Scott (representing the Baptist Church), Shahnaz Din (representing Key Stage 2), and Rachel Beaumont (representing the Church of England).

Clive Haines, Deputy Director for Education (Achieving for Children, AfC), announced that he would be stepping down from SACRE as RBWM's representative with Helen Mastrilli, SEND/EAL Advisory Teacher (AfC), taking his place.

The Chair noted that David Saunders was stepping down as one of the three Church of England representatives and that Suzanne Hull was stepping down as Headteacher at Oakfield First School and consequently as the Academy representative on SACRE.

6 Budget Update

Unusually, a total of only £3,505 had been spent to date, leaving around £3,000 left over (around half the budget) to be spent before the end of the month (March 2024). Some more bursaries to schools had been agreed but not yet received.

Anne Andrews suggested that she ask the Oxford Diocese to raise the invoice for the financial year 2024-25 early, if another contract was signed, enabling SACRE to make use of funding for the following year to work on Development Plan priorities.

7 Ofsted/SIAMS Reports

The Chair gave a brief overview of the three SIAMS reports for Braywood C of E First School (inspected on 23rd November 2023), Holy Trinity C of E Primary School, Cookham (inspected on 7th December 2023) and Knowl Hill C of E Primary School (inspected on January 11th 2024), summarising that all three schools had been judged to be living up to their foundation as Church of England schools.

8 SACRE Development Plan

The Chair referred to the SACRE Development Plan Progress Report. Areas for improvement included the turnaround time of SACRE minutes and promotion of the Audit Tool. Laura Dexter stated that awareness of this was becoming more widespread, particularly at the RE Network meetings.

A Borough innovation had brought together primary subject leads, meeting after school. Furze Platt Infants School had hosted an RE meeting which had been very useful. Secondary schools continued to run their own network meetings.

Clive Haines suggested to arrange one combined meeting for primary and secondary school teachers. Anne Andrews suggested combining primary and secondary RE Network meetings in 2025. Anne Andrew and Clive Haines agreed to arrange the dates for the RE Network meetings for 2025.

ACTION: Clive Haines and Anne Andrews to arrange the dates for the RE Network meetings for 2025.

**Anne
Andrews
and Clive
Haines**

9 Feedback from Teachers/School Visits Relating to RE/CW

The Chair planned to visit all three recently inspected schools, Anthony Lewis (Humanist representative) visited two primary schools and Margaret Smith also visited a primary school. Michael Gammage (Bahá'í Faith representative) had visited some out-of-Borough schools.

10 Training Attended and Future Training

Referring to the (primarily NASACRE) training list attached to the agenda, the Chair believed SACRE was getting its money's worth from its NASACRE subscription due to the regular attendance at training sessions.

It was agreed that as Anne Andrews would be there anyway, as a member of NASACRE, the Chair and Barbara Meaney (Catholic Church representative), Vice-Chair, would both attend the forthcoming NASACRE AGM on Monday 20th May 2024, in York.

The Chair mentioned that the training session on how SACREs could effectively monitor RE in schools on 5th December 2023 had 73 online attendees, highlighting that this was clearly a universal area of concern.

11 RE Network Meetings: Primary and Secondary

The Chair declared that discussion for this item had taken place during 'Item 8 – SACRE Development Plan'.

12 Any Other Business

The Chair raised the issue of validated GCSE and A-Level data which had now been received. She suggested that this data should be circulated and discussed at the next SACRE meeting in June 2024.

ACTION: Laurence Ellis to circulate GCSE and A-Level data with the agenda for next meeting in June 2024.

Laurence Ellis

Anne Andrews also requested that any content for the next SACRE newsletter, which was due to be published after Easter 2024, be sent to her.

13 Dates Of Future Meetings

Future SACRE and Agreed Syllabus Conference meeting dates were to be confirmed at the Council meeting on 11th March 2024.

Post-Meeting Update:

Future meeting dates:

- Monday 24th June 2024 at 5:00pm – Eton Wick CE First School
- Tuesday 10th September 2024 at 5:00pm
- Monday 9th December 2024 at 5:00pm
- Monday 3rd March 2025 at 5:00pm

AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE

14 Welcome

The Chair declared that the SACRE meeting had ended and that the Agreed Syllabus Conference had begun.

15 Apologies for Absence

As with the SACRE meeting, apologies for absence were received from Councillor Douglas, Ila Gangotra (Hindu representative), Vicci Davidson (Methodist representative), Karen Waller (Headteacher representative – Eton Wick CE First School), Ravinder Singh (Sikh representative), and Chris Sayers (Buddhist representative).

Anne Andrews reported that from across Berkshire and its SACREs, she had received feedback on the Draft Syllabus from Humanists, a Jewish representative, several Free Churches, the Church of England, and the Catholic Church. She had also received feedback from the Hindu, Buddhist and Bahai faith groups. Most of the feedback had been positive.

Amendments had been minor, such as including Christian narrative stories and the Jewish festivals. She also changed some wording slightly on Humanism. In the current draft proposal, Judaism would be taught in Key Stage 1 with Islam in Lower Key Stage 2, with the option that Judaism and Islam could be revisited in Upper Key Stage 2. There had been a suggestion to switch Judaism from Key Stage 1 to Lower Key Stage 2 and place Islam into Key Stage 1 to alternate between Abrahamic and Dharmic faiths.

SACRE members were asked for their views. Barbara Meaney believed that Judaism should be taught first due to it preceding the other Abrahamic religions and that students might develop a basic understanding and then revisit it later on. Thomas Kingsley-Jones (KS3 Teacher representative – Churchmead School) agreed.

Anne Andrews stated that Judaism was not to be taught at Key Stage 3 in the current proposed revision of the Agreed Syllabus; instead, Buddhism, Humanism and Islam would be taught, similar to the current Agreed Syllabus. Thomas Kingsley-Jones commented that Churchmead, like Desborough College, had many feeder schools and that there was no guarantee that those schools had taught Judaism in any depth.

When Anne Andrews asked for her opinion, Shahnaz Din (KS2 Teacher representative – Lowbrook Academy) believed that teaching Islam in Lower Key Stage 2 worked well.

Anne Andrews assured colleagues that other religions could be referred to alongside the core religions being taught.

Following an enquiry from Rachel Beaumont (Church of England representative), Anne Andrews explained that the purpose of the Syllabus was to establish the legal requirements relating to schools, hence the suggestion of linking specific religions to Key Stages so that students would be taught Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hindu Dharma and Sikhism by the end of Lower Key Stage 2. By Upper Key Stage 2, there would be a clear cut-off point and schools could then revisit the aforementioned religions or introduce Buddhism. She added that the general outlook of the syllabus was that the students should be exposed to Christianity and another religion in every academic year.

After pointing out that only 40% of RBWM schools would be obliged to follow the Agreed Syllabus, Clive Haines wondered if it could be considered 'a recommendation' or even if the title might be changed from 'Agreed Syllabus'. Anne Andrews believed that it was a legal obligation to call it an 'Agreed Syllabus'. Clive Haines said that he would look into the legality of the title, with Anne Andrews suggesting that she could ask what the general view of the Agreed Syllabus was at the next NASACRE meeting.

ACTIONS:

- **Clive Haines to check the legality of the title for the 'Agreed Syllabus', namely whether it is obligatory.**

Clive Haines

- **Anne Andrews to ask NASACRE the general view about the title of 'Agreed Syllabus'.**

**Anne
Andrews**

The next iteration of the draft Agreed Syllabus would not be circulated until after a session focussing on Key Stage 3 with other RE advisers on 20th March 2024. Further feedback would then be sought from SACRE members.

17 Pan-Berkshire Hub/JASC - Developments

Six Twilight sessions had been identified for work with groups of teachers. Anne Andrews hoped to have two EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) and Key Stage 1 meetings to finalise the content, then do the same for Key Stage 2 and then Key Stage 3. A significant amount of money from the RE Hub would be allocated to this. Anne Andrews hoped that her RE adviser colleagues would do something similar with teachers of Key Stages 4 and 5.

18 Next Steps

Twilight meetings, which would take place virtually, would be the next step.

When asked by Barbara Meaney about the timeframe for the Syllabus, Anne Andrews said that she hoped to produce a final draft by September 2024, anticipating that more changes would be made before then. She added that teacher resourcing would be an ongoing process, stating that the statutory content needed to be prioritised so that it was ready to go. In 2025, once the content was agreed upon, teachers could then work on developing resources.

19 Any Other Business

There was no additional business.

20 Dates of Future Meetings

The Chair expressed her gratitude to Karen Waller to use the Eton Wick C of E First School for the next SACRE meeting venue.

Future SACRE and Agreed Syllabus Conference meeting dates were to be confirmed at the Council meeting on 11th March 2024.

ACTION: Laurence Ellis to circulate future meeting dates to SACRE members once the dates were confirmed.

**Laurence
Ellis**

Post-Meeting Update:

Future meeting dates:

- Monday 24th June 2024 at 5:00pm – Eton Wick C of E First School
- Tuesday 10th September 2024 at 5:00pm
- Monday 9th December 2024 at 5:00pm
- Monday 3rd March 2025 at 5:00pm

The meeting, which began at 5.02 pm, ended at 6.54 pm