

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**

**12 DECEMBER 2013**

PRESENT: Councillor Natasha Airey (acting Chairman), Saghir Ahmed (Islamic Trust), Dalwyn Attwell (Free Churches), Michael Gammage (Baha'i Community), Ila Gangotra (Hindu Society of Maidenhead), Felicity Gunn (Church of England), Caroline Johnson (Roman Catholic Schools), Councillor Richard Kellaway and Nick Lowe (Free Churches).

Officers in attendance: Rob Cowan and Jo Fageant.

**ACTION**

**1 Appointment of Chairman and Vice Chairman**

Due to the meeting not being quorate, it was agreed that the appointment of the Chairman and Vice Chairman for the academic year would therefore take place at the next meeting following the resolution of the constitution by the Forum. It was agreed that Councillor Mrs Airey would Chair this meeting.

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Cllr Mrs Airey be appointed as Chairman for the duration of the meeting.**

**2 Apologies for Absence & Declarations of Interest**

Apologies for absence were received from Karen Butler, Louise Ceska, Melody Erasmus, Simon Evry, Hilary Harris, Joan Hicks, Councillor Eileen Quick

**3 Minutes**

Members approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 June 2013.

**4 Matters Arising**

The Chairman outlined the actions arising from the previous meeting and sought an update in respect of progress:

The clerk agreed to continue work previous clerks had begun investigating responses in respect of representations on SACRE from the Hindu community, Methodist Church, NASUWT, Catholic Church and Church of England. It was noted that representatives had been identified in some cases however clarification was still required regarding whether membership to SACRE had been completed.

**Rob Cowan**

Jo Fageant recommended a 4 year term of office for members. It was noted that if that was introduced members would need to be re-nominated and membership re-newed after the change was made. The clerk agreed to administer this change to SACRE's constitution.

**Rob Cowan**

It was noted that a Contact List of Places of Worship containing key information of what they can offer schools was being produced. Jo Fageant explained that she would be working on the List in January 2014. She asked Nick Lowe to gather information from the Churches, and he said he would do so through Churches Together. It was suggested that charities, particularly

religious charities, be added to the Contact List. This was noted as being a potential development for the future. The Contact List was considered important as it would help sustain contacts between schools and religious groups as staff changed.

**Jo Fageant/  
Nick Lowe**

It was noted that speaking to members of faith groups was considered more beneficial to learners than just learning from a textbook.

It was noted that Constitutional change at the previous meeting had been decided to introduce further religions, Buddhism and Baha'I into Group A of the SACRE membership. The clerk advised that the matter was being dealt with by the legal department and the clerk agreed to chase the matter up before the next meeting.

**Rob Cowan**

SACRE members considered the Development Plan. It was noted that the budget was planned however headteachers and heads of RE were still to approve it. Louise Ceska had agreed to speak regarding the matter however she had given her apologies. Jo Fageant stated that she would chase this up with Ms Ceska.

**Jo Fageant**

## **5 Budget Update**

Members received an update of the latest budget position from Jo Fageant. It was noted that plans were in place to spend the budget in its entirety as any money not spent would not be carried over into the next municipal year. A number of projects were noted that would require funds from the budget.

SACRE would go forward with the young ambassadors project which would select sixth formers to speak to primary school children about their religious beliefs. Training would be needed for the project however the number of ambassadors had not been confirmed.

Furthermore, the Contact List and details would be maintained on a website.

It was noted that SACRE's biggest expenditure would be the Conference which would take place on 31 March 2014. The conference would cover religious education for both primary and secondary school with nationally renowned specialist speakers for both age groups. The schools of Windsor and Maidenhead would be given the opportunity to register first, and after the February 2014 half term registration would be opened to schools in the rest of Berkshire. It was noted that teachers would be charged for the Conference to ensure people who registered actually turned up to the Conference as well as to help cover the cost of the event which included the speakers' fees, expenses such as travel and printing costs, as well as the hall hire. 60 attendees were expected, 40 from primary schools and 20 from secondary schools. SACRE members also declared their interest in attending the Conference and it was agreed that they should register their intention to attend, though members stated they would stand at the back and only stay for a short time to avoid taking up space intended for teachers.

It was noted that a correction needed to be made to the leaflet as the Conference would take place on Monday 31 March not Wednesday 31 March.

It was noted that more detail would be available regarding the Budget at the next meeting.

**Jo Fageant/  
Simon Evry**

## **6 Development Plan**

Members noted the Development Plan was being produced by Jo Fageant. It was noted that the document was a statutory requirement which required details of costing.

SACRE members noted that the film festival which had been discussed at previous meetings was not going to take place in the municipal year 2013-2014 due to it being too expensive.

## **7 Annual SACRE Report**

Members noted the Annual SACRE Report. It was noted that the layout of the Report had previously been constrained by a specific template however that constriction had since been removed. Due to this, the layout had become more creative to allow schools to gain more from the document.

The clerk agreed to provide the correct website links for the front page of the report.

**Rob Cowan**

SACRE members discussed the SACRE membership list. It was agreed that the clerk would investigate whether memberships had been properly updated.

**Rob Cowan**

It was noted that it was the responsibility of the SACRE to monitor the provision and quality of RE and collective worship in the Borough's schools however it was virtually impossible to fulfil this obligation as other organisations such as Ofsted had ceased reporting on it.

Members questioned whether anything could be done for newly qualified teachers (NQTs). It was noted that a RE package was available however it was optional.

Members suggested the use of the registration form for the March Conference as a method gauging confidential feedback. Members also considered questioning students themselves as to whether they enjoyed what they learned. It was noted that feedback would be dependent on the school and that the Young Ambassadors project would provide an appropriate sounding board. It was also noted that feedback could be acquired from teachers at the Twilight Sessions. Furthermore, it was considered that Councillor Eileen Quick might have held information regarding the number of teachers who attended courses.

## **8 Ofsted 2013 Report on RE**

Members noted the 2013 Ofsted Report for RE.

The SACRE members considered the similarity between the 2013 and 2010 reports which had rephrased the same issues, such as teachers' lack of confidence teaching RE, inadequate training, limited CPD, and the fact that RE had fallen 'under the radar'. It was noted that the report considered the issue at a national level and was not specific to Windsor and Maidenhead. The question was raised as to whether the SACRE could ask RBWM to report on what was being done to tackle these issues in the Borough.

The SACRE members considered positive parts of the report in Part B, such as the development of the enquiry model syllabus. This system posed open-ended questions in a similar manner to the rest of the curriculum. It was described as offering a challenging approach for both teachers and learners.

Members were informed by Jo Fageant that feedback had been solely positive regarding this development, however they were also advised to consider the possibility that negative feedback had not been received because it would have been considered impolite.

Members raised concern that such a learning method required an initial grounding, without which learners did not have the facilities to engage with the subject.

It was noted that a 'building blocks' approach was required whereby each year learners developed on the previous year's knowledge. It was considered appropriate that learners begin with the basic elements of the subject matter when young, and develop in complexity as they get older.

Members questioned whether the syllabus was available on the RBWM website.

## **9 REC Review of RE Document**

The SACRE members noted the Religious Education Council's (REC) Review of Religious Education in England 2013. The document was noted as non-statutory guidance.

It was noted that when the syllabus was reviewed in 2017 this document could be used as guidance.

The document removed the old pillar system and replaced it with 3 aims. It also removed the Level 8 scale though no replacement had been offered which would be needed as Ofsted judged schools by progress requiring a system to gauge progress.

## **10 NASACRE Briefing Paper regarding RE Review Document**

The SACRE members noted the NASACRE Briefing Paper which highlighted the non-statutory nature of the above REC Review Document.

## **11 Briefing Paper for Governors on RE**

The SACRE members noted the REC guidance for governing bodies of both primary and secondary schools. The guidance reported the outcomes of an inquiry held by the All Party Parliamentary Group for RE (APPG). The documents were described as follow up reports to an initial report which had unmasked the truth regarding RE provision.

SACRE members agreed that a copy of the guidance would be sent to all governors in schools in the Borough with a letter reminding them of the March Conference.

**Jo Fageant/  
Simon Evry**

It was noted that Ofsted inspections had continually questioned whether RE

provision was being met to the required standard. The SACRE members agreed this information should be passed on to all school governors.

It was noted that collective worship was still a requirement. Members questioned how schools might pool their resources in this matter. It was noted that collective training in this matter was limited as church schools and community schools followed different legislation in this regard, requiring different training for each.

Members questioned what training was available and how it was accessed in the Borough. The clerk agreed to include this as an item on the next meeting's Agenda.

**Rob Cowan**

## **12 Dates of Future Meetings**

The clerk agreed to send members of SACRE e-invites to the next meeting for their electronic diaries.

**Rob Cowan**

Dates of future meetings are as follows –

Monday 10 February 2014

Monday 9 June 2014

The meeting, which began at 6.30pm, ended at 7.55pm