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ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

15 June 2016

PRESENT: MIKE GAMMAGE (CHAIRMAN), KAREN BUTLER (VICE CHAIRMAN), COUNCILLOR NATASHA AIREY, SAGHIR AHMED, ANNE ANDREWS, LOUISE CESKA, ILA GONGOTRA, FELICITY GUNN, HILARY HARRIS, REV JOAN HICKS, LIZ JENKINS, BARBARA MEANEY, ANTHEA WEST AND RAVINDER SINGH ZANDU.

Officers in attendance: Shilpa Manek

ACTION

1 Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Apologies For Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kellaway and Gary Homewood.

3 Minutes Of The last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting on 14 March 2016 were unanimously agreed.

The Members went through the matters arising as follows:

Action	Responsibility	Progress
To make amendments discussed at meeting and to send to Members again for clearance.	Clerk	Completed.
To send budget information to Members as soon as it is available.	Clive Haines	Clive Haines updated Members.
To contact Secondary school heads to respond. To prepare draft email for Louise Ceska to send to all secondary school heads.	Louise Ceska Anne Andrews	Not a great response. However training is viable.
To write a letter positively responding to its coordinator, Jan Lever.	Chairman	Completed.
To collate Anne Andrews work to date and the conclusion of the self evaluation, together with the teacher survey results, in advance of discussion on a SACRE development plan at the next meeting in June.	Chairman	Anne Andrews to revisit the development plan after Hub work started.
To try and find a Baptist Church representative to join SACRE.	Clerk	Contacted Boyn Hill Baptist Church. They will advertise position in their weekly newsletter.
To rearrange dates, meetings not to be on Mondays and aligning them with other councils.	Clerk	In Hand.

4 Membership Update

Looking for representatives for all vacancies.

Karen Butler offered to contact Melody Erasmus, who was supposed to be a Member of SACRE but has never attended any meetings.

ACTION: Karen Butler to contact Free Church.

5 Hub update including dates for next meetings - Karen Butler and Anne Andrews

Karen Butler attended the meeting.

It was good to meet colleagues of other SACREs and discuss many points. Further work needs to be done and more places of worship need to be visited.

It was great to see that all SACREs were committed to the funding.

Karen Butler discussed the aims, terms of reference and principles from page 21 of the Hub minutes.

A conference has been organised on Wednesday 28 September 2016, 6.00pm – 9.00pm in the Holiday Inn, Winnersh Triangle. The cost would be £35.00 per head and each SACRE could fund four people. This conference would bring teachers together with new SACRE members. It was a holistic approach with teacher input.

Jan Lever offered to put bid in for £4000 to Westhill Award Application and also prepare an action plan together for next year.

The Members unanimously agreed that we could commit to four places for the conference.

The Chairman was delighted that there was a high level of commitment from everyone.

Karen Butler went through the key points from the action plan.

A half day training course for SACRE Members would be useful to disseminate information in faith communities. Anne Andrews would run the training for the host communities.

Liz Jenkins requested that the training should include the different needs of secondary schools in terms of visits to places of worship and not focus solely on the needs of primary colleagues.

6 Report from NASACRE - Barbara Meany and Anne Andrews

See attached Barbara Meany's note of meeting and activity that took place at the conference and was repeated at the meeting.

ACTION: Anne Andrews to collate all responses from the activity and then circulate to Members for approval before sending to NASACRE.

7 Brief verbal report on the British Values Conference in Bracknell - Anne Andrews

Anne Andrews informed Members that thirteen schools had attended which was a great turnout and excellent feedback was given.

8 Report on sponsorship funding initiative - Michael Gammage

The Chairman updated Members on the response received from the WAM Get Involved team. They had suggested requesting assistance from Rotary or Lions. It would also be worth contacting Churches Together.

ACTION: The Chairman to contact Rotary and Lions groups.

9 Feedback on this term's training (NB Primary training not scheduled till 20/06/16)

The training at the Mosque was very successful, very helpful and everybody who attended, thoroughly enjoyed.

It was noted that general messages to schools were not working well and that personal contact worked much better.

ACTION: Clive Haines to ask Elaine Norstrom to collect RE contact at each school.

ACTION: Clerk to add to next meeting Agenda.

10 Feedback from any recent reports - SIAMS or OFSTED - Anne Andrews & Clive Haines

An update note provided for Ofsted attached for information.

11 Dates Of Future Meetings

Members noted that the next meeting was on 8 November 2016.

AOB

Karen Butler informed Members of an excellent book by the Bible Society which was produced as a tribute for the Queens 90th birthday.

The meeting, which began at 6.00 pm, ended at 8.15 pm

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NASACRE AGM 2016 - Notes

Key note 1:

Elizabeth Butler-Sloss talked about the report that was published earlier this year about Faith and Belief in Society. She made it clear that the report is aspirational, rather than factual and that Andrew Copson, who heads up the British Humanist Society, played a large part.

She stated that religious policy has been piecemeal and mostly been trying to catch up with the current situation. The issues as she see them are as follows:

- The need for all religions to be treated equally under law
- The need for greater religious literacy to combat conflict and stereotyping
- The need to recognise that for many religion and culture are inextricably intertwined
- The fact that affiliation, belief & practice, beliefs and ideas are not evenly interwoven
- The need for greater religious literacy is not just a matter for schools, but for media & government
- What we teach now will affect the leaders who run the country tomorrow and into the future
- Locally agreed syllabuses that sanitise religion
- The lack of inclusion of non-religious worldviews
- Too much Christianity

She sees some of the solutions as follows:

- There should be a statutory entitlement that establishes content and learning objectives
- This should be broad and inclusive
- It should have the same status as humanities subjects
- Teacher training needs overhauling
- The requirement for daily act of Collective Worship should be repealed and replaced with a time for reflection
- Admission procedures for faith schools need overhauling
- Faith schools could have links to different faith schools to ensure breadth and encounter
- The community of a school should engage with the community outside the gates
- There should be independent inspection
- There should be a freedom to debate all views

There were questions from the floor concerning the actions or rather lack of it in response to the various reports, the local nature of SACREs and how the differences between urban and rural areas are to be addressed, the choice of faith adherents for jobs within schools and whether RE really is a humanities subject. A request was made for evidence that the version of RE taught is sanitised. None of the answers really dealt with the questions, in my opinion.

Dilwyn Hunt raised the issue, as did the previous speaker that much of what has been talked about has been going on for ages and that local SACREs have played a large part in that. An expert panel

risked undermining the role of SACREs which have ensured that there are fully-integrated religious and non-religious world views in RE. Collective worship should not be described as being Christian; it is meant to be inclusive though of a broadly Christian character.

Keynote 2:

Adam Dinham: The future of teaching and learning about religion and belief

The PowerPoint is available on the NASACRE website for any who are interested.

He identified 3 main areas for discussion: policy, teaching and learning and young people's thinking.

In terms of policy, he set the scene, including the background and agreed with Dame Butler-Sloss that the current settlement has evolved as a way of keeping up with the real picture. There is more believing without belonging; more belonging without believing and quite a lot of non-belief. As a result of immigration and globalisation people encounter increasing diversity.

As a result, neither a Christian nor a Secular settlement will work.

With the proliferation of academies and free schools which do not need to follow the locally agreed syllabus there is a freedom from LA control. The purposes of RE have multiplied.

RE has been marginalised and colonised – that is pushed to the side and filled with things that are not RE. There are discussions over purpose, content and place in RE. It has sometimes been distributed across other subjects and topics or disguised as philosophy and ethics. In many places it has been given 45 minutes a week, with an annual spend of £1 per child. Other topics such as cohesion, citizenship and ethics are often included.

This has impacts in wider society. Anxiety, indifference and hostility often result. Do we want RE dictated by the new atheists, who seem to have the loudest voices? There is confusion between Religious Literacy and fuzzy secularity, which is often mistaken for neutrality (which of course does not exist).

He recommends a review of SACREs alongside other bodies, the creation of a national panel to develop a national framework and this needs balance. But who are the stakeholders? If faith leaders are the spokespeople, which ones are picked? Who chooses? How are they chosen? For whom do they speak? Who are the others? Not all parts of faith communities meet and have coherence and contact, so who is the final arbiter?

It is a muddle. There are issues over CW, the right to withdraw, faith school admission policies and the position of religion in the wider life of the school.

The purpose of RE needs to be clarified: it is interesting and links to history and art; it is instrumental and has a social element. There is an assumption that more encounters lead to more love, but this is not always the case.

Regarding the content, the RE 4 Real research found that young people wanted more breadth, a "stretchier" idea of what religion is; more lived RE and elements of informal religion and belief. Is there a way that SACREs can look more like the real, local religious landscape?

The structure of RE also needs to be explored. What should go where? The role of SACRE is crucial and it has to include the Church of England, as much is connected culturally and historically to Christianity. RE needs to teach that there is Christianity and other religions too.

The political issue raises the question of timing. Are these issues too big and totemic to handle for little or no gain, but lots of grief?

The key issue is religious literacy as it affects attitudes. But attitude, disposition and feelings come into play, even when there is little or no knowledge. However it is important to recognise that no one can know everything. It is important to learn how to ask appropriate questions in an appropriate way. And everybody can be involved, regardless of religious belief or none.

There needs to be an opportunity for robust disagreement about truth claims, rather than the syncretistic. There needs to be talk about the discovery of truth and what about fundamentalists? Should they be included?

Questions addressed the need for an opt out, the sociological twist often given to RE and the tension between theology and sociology.

There followed an activity looking closely in small groups at the key recommendations from the most recent reports. This is worth replicating in SACRE.

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Shaping the Future (1)

Living with Difference: community, diversity & the common good
Butler-Sloss (Dec 2105)

Recommendation 4

“All pupils in state-funded schools should have a statutory entitlement to a curriculum about religion, philosophy and ethics that is relevant to today’s society and the broad framework of such a curriculum should be nationally agreed. The legal requirement for schools to hold acts of collective worship should be repealed, and replaced by a requirement to hold inclusive times for reflection”

Discuss this in your group, noting your comments and how far you do or do not agree with the recommendations

Recommendation	Comments	Conclusion: Strongly Agree (1) to strongly disagree (5)
<i>All pupils in state-funded schools should have a statutory entitlement</i>		
<i>to a curriculum about religion, philosophy and ethics</i>		
<i>that is relevant to today’s society,</i>		
<i>and the broad framework of such a curriculum should be nationally agreed</i>		
<i>The legal requirement for schools to hold acts of collective worship should be repealed</i>		
<i>and replaced by a requirement to hold inclusive times for reflection”</i>		

Shaping the Future (2)

RE for Real: The future of Teaching and Learning about Religion and Belief
Dinham-Shaw (Nov 2015)

Recommendations 1 and 2

“A statutory National Framework for Religion and Belief Learning should be developed, and be applicable to all schools, balancing shared national approaches with school level determination.”

“Since SCAREs currently play a leading part in religion and belief learning, there is an urgent need for review of their role, and the role of others, such as professional bodies, local authorities, schools themselves, and other experts, in the forming of learning. This should inform and result in the appointment of a national panel to develop the framework”

Discuss this in your group, noting your comments and how far you do or do not agree with the recommendations.

Recommendation	Comments	Conclusion: Strongly Agree (1) to strongly disagree (5)
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<i>and be applicable to all schools,</i>		
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<i>This should inform and result in the appointment of a national panel to develop the framework”</i>		

Shaping the Future (3)

**A new Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools
Clarke-Woodhead (June 2015)**

Recommendation 4

“The nationally agreed syllabus would be determined by the Secretary of State in agreement with a newly created ‘National Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (NASACRE)’ comprising experts on religion and education, and after formal consultation and input from the relevant established professional bodies and representatives of religions, humanism and other belief systems. This nationally agreed syllabus should be reviewed every 5/7 years.

Recommendation 11

“The local Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) are given a new role which includes participating in the consultations about the content of the national RE curriculum, helping local implementation of the national RE syllabus, promoting community cohesion and educating for diversity, and advising on local availability of religious instruction”

Discuss this in your group, noting your comments and how far you do or do not agree with the recommendations.

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Conclusion: Strongly Agree (1) to strongly disagree (5)</i>
<i>The nationally agreed syllabus</i>		
<i>would be determined by the Secretary of State</i>		
<i>in agreement with a newly created ‘National Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (NASACRE)’ comprising experts on religion and education</i>		
<i>and after formal consultation and input from the relevant established professional bodies and representatives of religions, humanism and other belief systems.</i>		
<i>This nationally agreed syllabus should be reviewed every 5/7 years.</i>		
<i>The local Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) are given a new role which includes participating in the consultations about the content of the national RE curriculum,</i>		
<i>helping local implementation of the national RE syllabus,</i>		
<i>promoting community cohesion</i>		
<i>educating for diversity</i>		
<i>and advising on local availability of religious instruction”</i>		

SACRE – Ofsted quotes

The Queen Anne – Ofsted 12 January 2016

- Other exciting opportunities include performing at St George’s Chapel at Windsor Castle.
- The school’s work to develop pupils’ understanding of diversity, including other faiths and customs, is extremely effective.
- The support and care provided for individuals and their families is meticulously planned to ensure pupils are happy, comfortable in school and well supported to learn. Of the parents I spoke to, half spoke enthusiastically about the individual support their child or family had experienced. A good example of this was the written feedback for a pupil for whom English is an additional language; the comments from the teacher were translated into her home language.
- Much work has been done to develop a relevant and current curriculum, which provides many opportunities for pupils to consider diversity, tolerance and respect. The work in topic books does not always represent the high-quality discussions and learning that take place.

Eton Wick – Ofsted 2 March 2016

- The curriculum is broad and balanced, providing a wide range of opportunities to enable pupils to increase their knowledge and develop effective life skills. Through this, pupils’ personal development and welfare is supported well.
- Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well. Pupils have a thorough understanding of Christian values and link these well to school rules. They are clear about the need to treat people with respect and can explain what this means. They learn about elements of democracy through their school council elections and the rule of law through the school rules.
- The school’s work to promote pupils’ personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are polite, well-mannered and considerate of each other and of adults.
- Pupils develop a strong sense of community. Their current project of ‘clean for the Queen’ involving litter picking prior to the Queen’s imminent 90th birthday, reflects the ways in which the pupils work together for the good of the wider community.

Bisham – 16 March 16

- The leadership of the wider curriculum is not well organised and pupils’ books show that the full range of national curriculum subjects is not covered comprehensively. Furthermore, pupils have limited opportunities to consider life in the wider United Kingdom. Major festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year are marked, but the varied cultures of modern Britain are not well represented in the curriculum, in the

resources pupils use, for example in the library, or in displays around the school. This limits pupils' cultural development.

- The spiritual, moral and social development of pupils is a strength. Pupils' prayers, displayed in the entrance area, set a tone of warm Christian welcome which is evident throughout the daily life of the school. Teachers use the school's rural setting well to provide opportunities for pupils to wonder at the beauty of nature, for example by listening intently in the 'quiet garden' or observing seasonal changes. All the adults in school model firm attitudes of courtesy and respect. This sets high expectations to which most pupils respond well and ensures all pupils are treated equally.
- Pupils are taught well about right and wrong, and have valuable opportunities to reflect on the consequences of their actions if mistakes are made. The fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, respect and individual freedom are promoted well, including through activities such as school- and class-council discussions.

Wessex Primary – Ofsted 10 May 2016

- The way that the school looks after pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Staff are vigilant about ensuring that each pupil's social and emotional, as well as academic, needs are met. Safeguarding is managed very well and pupils feel safe and well cared for.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well. It is incorporated into the life of the school and the 10 Wessex values, which are known by pupils and promoted during assemblies and in lessons. All staff have a commitment to equal opportunities and to ensuring that no pupil falls behind and that discriminatory language is not tolerated. Pupils are taught about different faiths and cultures and visit places of worship. They show respect and tolerance towards others. They are learning also to respect the environment, as demonstrated by the ECO team who pick up rubbish and make sure that energy is not wasted. Pupils are being prepared well for life in modern Britain through learning about democracy, for example with voting for school council members. They learn about the rule of law, for example in personal, social, emotional and health lessons and in history where they discuss crime and punishment.
- Pupils show tolerance towards others and are respectful. They are polite and friendly, holding doors open for others, and are happy to talk about their work. They cooperate well in pairs and small groups from an early age. A parent said, 'they teach children manners and respect and kindness'. The respect that pupils show towards those with a disability is exemplary.