

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

30 June 2022

PRESENT: Michael Gammage (Chairman), Karen Butler (Vice-Chairman),
Ravinder Singh Zandu, Margaret Dudley, Anthony Lewis, Barbara Meaney, Dai Prendiville
Councillor Maureen Hunt and Councillor Julian Sharpe

Also in attendance: Councillor Mandy Brar and Councillor John Baldwin

Officers in attendance: Mark Beeley and Anne Andrews

ACTION

1 Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Reflection

Barbara Meaney gave SACRE a brief overview of RE at St Edwards. The school originally consisted of two separate schools, which were traditionally Catholic and Church of England respectively. In the 1980s, the two schools combined together. There was no eucharist but there were services. Turns were taken to go to Church of England churches or to Catholic churches for services. A Church of England Vicar and a Catholic Priest both attended the school. In terms of teaching, St Edwards taught both faiths evenly. The school was inspected by the Catholic Portsmouth diocese and the Oxford Church of England diocese respectively. Inspections were carried out by both dioceses on the same day. Pupils also attended the school from other faiths and religions.

The Chairman commented on worship at the school.

Barbara Meaney said that there was some form of worship every morning, usually provided remotely. In the afternoon, there was a period of 10 minutes set aside for prayer which was led by the children.

Anne Andrews added that it was something that the SIAMS inspections encouraged, it was good to see prayer led by the children.

Councillor Hunt asked if all children who attended St Edwards were required to take part in the prayer, or whether they could opt out.

Barbara Meaney said that there had been no requests made to withdraw from the time set aside for prayer, it was also seen as a learning opportunity. All children were asked to be respectful.

The Chairman welcomed Dai Prendiville to the meeting.

Dai Prendiville said that he had started as the Head of RE at Desborough College in January 2022 but RE was not currently offered at the school and had not been for a number of years. He had been teaching a light timetable of Humanities subjects while RE was prepared and set up, ready to be taught from September 2022. All of KS3 would be taught RE for an hour a week, Dai Prendiville would be able to teach all of the classes. To help launch RE at the

school, the whole school had been taught RE for two consecutive Fridays. Guest speakers would be attending and all staff would be helping to teach RE across the school.

3 Apologies For Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Sarah Bradley, Councillor Stimson, Councillor Shelim, Thomas Kingsley-Jones, Hilary Harris, Clive Haines, Ila Gangotra, Clare Roberts and Chris Sayers.

4 Membership Update

The Chairman said that Dai Prendiville would be replacing Sarah Bradley as the KS4 representative. Margaret Dudley would be retiring and this would be her last meeting. There were currently three vacancies for the Free Churches.

Anne Andrews said that she would chase the Church of England to fill the remaining vacancy.

ACTION – Anne Andrews to see if someone from the Church of England would be interested in joining SACRE.

ACTION – Clive Haines to be advised that the local authority needed to take action to recruit to the vacant positions on SACRE.

Karen Butler expressed frustration at the number of vacancies from the Free Churches. She asked for clarification on who was responsible for filling the vacancies on the membership.

Anne Andrews said that the local authority was responsible for making the appointments.

Margaret Dudley said that there was a complete change over of staff, but she had highlighted that someone needed to be offered to join SACRE. Margaret Dudley said that she had passed over contact details so hopefully someone would be in contact.

Councillor Baldwin asked if there was a hierarchy or legislation on membership of SACRE.

Anne Andrews said that there was legislation covering the membership that SACRE needed to offer. There needed to be representatives from all religions, the Church of England, schools and local Councillors. It was the responsibility of the local authority to make appointments.

The Chairman suggested that it would be useful to circulate the SACRE constitution after the meeting.

ACTION – Mark Beeley to circulate the SACRE constitution.

Councillor Baldwin suggested that he was happy to help contact relevant groups to fill the vacancies on SACRE.

ACTION – Councillor Baldwin to confer with Clive Haines to offer support.

5 Minutes Of Meeting on 24/03/22

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 24th March 2022 were approved as a true and accurate record.

Karen Butler commented on an action from the previous meeting, Anne Andrews said that she would contact teachers through RE Network meetings to try to fill the KS1 vacancy. Karen Butler asked if this had been done.

Anne Andrews said that she had not been able to complete this action, there had only been five attendees at the last RE Network meeting. She suggested that a letter could be sent out to schools from Clive Haines, Anne Andrews was happy to draft the wording.

ACTION – Anne Andrews to draft wording for letter to be sent out to schools by Clive Haines.

Karen Butler asked if the invoice to the Hub had been paid by RBWM.

Anne Andrews said the invoices were delayed in going out due to a new finance system being used.

ACTION – Clive Haines to check if the invoice to the Hub had been paid.

Councillor Hunt asked if Ofsted felt that RE was now being taught as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

The Chairman said that there was usually an item on the agenda dedicated to this topic but unfortunately Clive Haines had been unable to attend the meeting.

ACTION – Clive Haines to provide update about Ofsted inspections in RBWM via email, in response to Councillor Hunt's question.

6 Feedback from NASACRE AGM

Anne Andrews said a summary had been sent to all SACREs and this could be sent out to SACRE Members.

ACTION – Mark Beeley to circulate the summary to SACRE Members, along with details of the NASACRE log in details.

Anne Andrews said that the draft handbook on RE had been discussed, a talk had been given by Richard Kueh considering the expectations around RE and how SACREs should be helping to ensure that quality RE was taught. The AGM considered the annual reports and feedback that had been received, the key role of SACRE was to advise the local authority, the vast majority of SACREs could not say what advice they had given their local authority.

Barbara Meaney said that she enjoyed the AGM, it was good to hear from Richard Quay. She got a lot out of the event both personally and professionally, she recommended that SACRE Members attended.

Anne Andrews said that the plan for 2023 was for the date to be the third Monday in May and would be held face to face, in London.

7 Update on the Hub and Films

Anne Andrews said that she had managed to pass over the last films to RE

Today, to be published on the website alongside the KS3 materials. A charge would be levied, which would have originally been £750 + VAT but this had now been lowered to £300 + VAT. After these films had been published, there would be films on the following religions; Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Sunni Muslim, Shia Muslim, Orthodox Jewish, Reform Jewish, Sikh and Hindu. Anne Andrews had received a copy of the Humanist film, she would be reviewing this shortly. It was likely the accompanying notes for the film would start to be produced in September. There had been no success in trying to communicate with the Orthodox Church in Reading, it was decided that making a film at the Russian Orthodox Church was not appropriate given current global events.

Barbara Meaney said that she knew of a Romanian Church which used the facilities of the church which she attended in Langley. She could share the contact details with Anne Andrews after the meeting.

ACTION – Barbara Meaney to share the contact details of the Romanian Church in Langley with Anne Andrews.

The Chairman said that his neighbour attended the Romanian Orthodox Church in Reading, which could also be an option. The production of the films was a significant achievement. The films were available to view on the NATRE website: [Real People Real Faith \(natre.org.uk\)](http://natre.org.uk).

The next discussion that the Hub needed to have was around plans for the syllabus review.

Anthony Lewis thanked the teachers and the council for their help producing the Humanist film. The film had been produced at Dedworth Library, he asked if there was anything he could do to help and if it would be possible to view the film before it went live.

Anne Andrews confirmed that this would be done once the edited version of the film had been completed.

ACTION – Anne Andrews to send Anthony Lewis a copy of the edited Humanist film once it was ready.

Karen Butler said that it would be great if more schools knew about the films, which were a very useful resource. The films that had been published so far had received a good number of views but it would be fantastic to increase this further.

8 Feedback from Teachers

Barbara Meaney said that generally things in schools had calmed down over the summer term, with the main focus being on exams. She had attended the recent RE Network meeting, which had been useful and productive.

Dai Prendiville said that there was a need for RE teachers to network, the RE Network meetings were a useful resource.

Anne Andrews said that she had spoken to Clive Haines and the RE Network would be included as part of the borough's wider training offer. The three dates for next year had been decided and would be communicated in due course. It would be useful to have more engagement from the local authority, for example in Bracknell Forest, the local authority officer always attended RE Network meetings. This would help to raise the profile of the meetings amongst RE teachers.

Karen Butler felt that it was unlikely that Clive Haines would have the capacity to attend network meetings. She suggested that it would be beneficial to enhance the connection between the RE Network and SACRE. Karen Butler found the meeting that she had attended to be useful and encouraged SACRE Members to attend too if they were able.

9 Draft Handbook from the Religious Education Council

The Chairman explained that the handbook was an interim report from the RE Council on the findings from the RE Commission and how this translated to the curriculum.

Anne Andrews said that there were three groups of teachers across the country who were using the handbook to turn it into a syllabus. The results would be available in 2023 along with the final report. This would then be considered before SACRE looked at the syllabus review.

The Chairman asked that if the syllabus expired, did it matter if a new syllabus had not been agreed and implemented.

Anne Andrews said that the agreed syllabus conference would review the syllabus and could decide that no changes were needed. Alternatively, the conference could decide to make minor changes. The syllabus needed to be reviewed, changes did not need to be made if they were not required. There was a government white paper on the academisation of all schools by 2030, which had a big impact on SACRE. The syllabus was written for maintained schools, this change would mean that SACRE would no longer need to write a syllabus.

10 Performance of Religious Education - Report Card

Anne Andrews said that report card was a visual document of what had been found during research into RE. It covered interesting information on the value of RE and also the challenges that RE faced. Around 34% of academies had reported that there was no timetabled RE, while 500 schools reported 0 hours of RE being taught in Year 11. There was comparisons of the amount of money put into RE compared to other secondary school subjects. Anne Andrews felt that there was a huge mismatch between how RE was regarded in society and the extent to which it was prioritised by the government and local authorities. SACRE needed to consider what action was taken, using local MPs and the council.

Dai Prendiville said that it did make sense that it was a legal requirement to teach RE, yet many schools who taught no RE received good and outstanding Ofsted inspections.

Councillor Baldwin questioned these comments, he was surprised that Ofsted inspections were ignoring certain parts of the regulations.

Anne Andrews said that there was evidence at some schools that RE was not being taught. She had seen an example of where two different schools had received a good and a requires improvement score respectively, both had the same line about RE not being taught included from Ofsted in the report.

The Chairman added that in a number of Ofsted reports, RE was not mentioned at all.

Councillor Brar asked how SACRE could help encourage schools to teach RE.

Anne Andrews said that the local authority could help by letting SACRE know if they were aware of schools that were not teaching RE. A fresh website trawl could be needed to understand what was happening in schools post pandemic. It was important that a local authority officer was able to attend SACRE meetings so that Members could be updated.

The Chairman suggested that SACRE needed to be more assertive in advising the local authority and that SACRE needed more input from the local authority.

Anne Andrews asked if the Executive Director of Children's Services received a copy of the SACRE minutes.

Mark Beeley said that they would receive an automated email informing them that the minutes had been published.

Councillor Brar suggested that Councillors could raise this with the Executive Director.

Councillor Sharpe said that the legal status of SACRE needed to be considered, he questioned whether SACRE was in the reporting line on things like Ofsted inspections or if it was only an advisory body.

The Chairman clarified that SACRE was a statutory advisory body, with the main role being to advise the local authority.

Councillor Sharpe said that because SACRE was an advisory body, there was no obligation for the local authority to inform them of which schools did not teach RE.

Anne Andrews added that part of SACRE's role was to monitor the delivery and provision of RE. It was not just the negative parts, SACRE also wanted to hear what was going well.

Councillor Sharpe said that the problem should be escalated to NASACRE, who could raise it to the government as something that needed to be considered.

The Chairman asked what mechanism could be used to move things forward.

Anne Andrews said that she would need to consider what would be best. A good working relationship with the local authority was essential, SACRE needed to be informed about what was happening in schools. It was not a legal duty for the local authority to inform SACRE about what was happening, but there was no reason why they would not.

ACTION – Anne Andrews to consider what the best way forward for SACRE would be.

11 SACRE Self-Assessment Tool

Anne Andrews said that the self-assessment tool had been circulated to Members, the aim was to see if the self-assessment tool was worth using.

The Chairman noted that the tool was separated out into five sections, he said that one section could be focused on at the next meeting.

Anne Andrews said that following the discussion on the previous agenda item, it would be beneficial to start with the first section which considered the relationship with the local authority.

The Chairman said that the tool allowed SACRE to ask some questions in a certain area and then determine which category each question fell in to.

12 Forward Plan

The Chairman said that SACRE had created a forward plan but had not received the budget asked for from the local authority.

Anne Andrews said that development points could be pulled out from the self-assessment tool. A development plan could then be developed, which outlined how things could be done differently.

13 Any Other Business

Anne Andrews mentioned the 'Still Standing' report, there had been a suggestion that SACREs should change into 'local advisory networks'. It was an interesting document to read and set out what SACRE could do differently. The appendices and the recommendations were the most important elements of the report. Anne Andrews suggested that the report could be read by SACRE Members over the summer, with a discussion at the next meeting in September around how SACRE could make itself more effective.

Barbara Meaney suggested that links could be made with ITT, especially as RE Network meetings could be offered through the local authority.

Anne Andrews said that primary RE teacher trainees could be advised to attend network meetings.

Karen Butler asked that the membership list was updated in Group D, there were a number of Councillors who regularly joined the meeting but did not appear on the list.

Mark Beeley explained that there were three Councillor representatives appointed by the local authority to sit on SACRE, they were Councillor Stimson, Councillor Shelim and Councillor Sharpe. Meeting links for every council meeting were sent to all Councillors as standard, which was why a number of other Councillors joined SACRE meetings and contributed.

Karen Butler thanked the other Councillors who had joined the meeting and for their contributions.

Barbara Meaney wished Hilary Harris all the best in her recovery and also thanked Margaret Dudley for all her work with SACRE, this was her last meeting before retirement.

14 Dates Of Future Meetings

The Chairman said that the plan for SACRE was to have three meetings a year on Zoom and one in person, most probably the summer meeting. He asked if this was still what everyone felt was best.

Karen Butler said that she preferred meeting in person, she had recently received a positive test and was therefore disappointed not to be able to attend the meeting in person at St Edwards.

Ravinder Singh said that he was happy with the arrangements, it was good that people had the option to join the meeting virtually too, if it was held in person.

Dai Prendiville said that he preferred in person meetings.

The Chairman suggested that meetings could be held in person at the Town Hall and could utilise the new AV system which would be installed shortly.

Anne Andrews raised concerns that there was no parking at the Town Hall, which made it much more difficult to access.

Karen Butler said that she liked the idea of holding meetings at different schools across the borough.

Anne Andrews suggested that SACRE could be hosted by three schools and a place of worship each year. A virtual meeting could be used for the December meeting.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: SACRE Members agreed that three meeting a year would be held in person, ideally either at schools or places of worship, with the December meeting taking place virtually.

The Chairman thanked Barbara Meaney for hosting the SACRE meeting, it had been great to be back in an RE classroom.

The meeting, which began at 6.00 pm, ended at 7.50 pm