

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

13 June 2023

PRESENT: Karen Butler (Chair), Vicci Davidson, Chris Sayers, David Saunders, Laura Dexter, Clare Roberts, Dai Prendiville and Richard Coe.

PRESENT (virtually): Barbara Meaney (Vice-Chair), Hilary Harris, Michael Gammage, Ravinder Singh Zandu, Councillor Kashmir Singh, Councillor Jack Douglas, Dr Anthony Lewis and Ila Gangotra

Officers in attendance: Anne Andrews and Kirsty Hunt

Officers in attendance (virtually): Clive Haines

ACTION

1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and attendees introduced themselves.

2 Introduction to RE and CW at Cheapside Primary School

Clare Roberts welcomed everyone to Cheapside Primary School and gave a presentation showing how religious education was delivered at the school, integrating the schools' values across each academic term. She concluded by highlighting the areas that required development at Cheapside Primary School which included developing their reflection space, the outside Forest School area and the work to support transition when pupils were moving to their next school. Clare Roberts reported that many of the school's children did not describe themselves as Christian but the videos to be shown, once the meeting closed, demonstrated their enthusiasm for religious discussions. She explained that pupils would go on to various schools including Charters and Ranelagh.

The Chair thanked Clare for her presentation and reported that she had participated in the site tour, had observed the Biblical quotations on the walls and the pictures showing the children demonstrating those sentiments and described the holistic approach as exemplary.

Rev Saunders commented that he had been intrigued to see the sensory room and that the school delivered a rounded approach to student wellbeing.

In response to a query about the choices to study certain religions through the school it was clarified that there were multiple opportunities to learn about each religion and where the presentation referred to a choice then both topics would be covered in both year groups.

Councillor K Singh offered the school support and information if they required further resources for Sikh studies.

Ann Andrews added that every many primary schools within the borough were following the locally agreed syllabus so that by the end of Year 6 the recommended religions of Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism would be covered. It was explained that schools were able to design when it was delivered within the curriculum.

Illa Gangotra praised the fact that Hinduism and Sikhism were being linked together as she considered it was vital for inclusivity for pupils to understand where the connections were between those two different religions.

3 Apologies For Absence

Apologies were received from Saghir Ahmed and Tom Kingsley-Jones. Sarah Chesterfield Terry is on extended leave.

4 Minutes Of Meeting on 6th March 2023

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2023 were approved as a true and correct record.

5 Matters arising

The Chair went through the actions from the last meeting:

- Item 6 - Membership update: the proposal to revise SACRE's constitution to make the Humanism representative role a full member in Group A rather than a co-optee was unresolved. This was being followed up with the Head of Legal and Governance. Anne Andrews commented that there had been a High Court ruling that set out it was unlawful not to allow Humanists to be represented in Group A.
ACTION: Kirsty Hunt to resolve the amendment to the terms of reference.
- Item 9 – All SACRE members who had missed the pre-meeting tour were encouraged to visit Churchmead to understand how it organised teaching and learning in RE and promoted its distinctive ethos.
ACTION: SACRE members to contact Democratic Services if they would like to attend a tour.
- Item 10 – No members had made requests for Hubs training but this was still available.
- Item 10 – Anne Andrews confirmed that the recent Network meeting had been held at Laura Dexter's school, Furze Platt Infants in Maidenhead.
- Item 10 – the Chair reported that she had attended the online NASACRE training on Collective Worship held on 14 March 2023 with Anne Andrews and Barbara Meaney.
- Item 14 – the Chair queried whether the NASACRE survey had been circulated to SACRE members in Group C but Anne Andrews commented that this was no longer relevant so if it had been missed this was now out of date.
- Item 17 – the RE exam results had been circulated to SACRE members and would be included in next year's SACRE Annual Report.
- Item 21 – It was confirmed that the Respect and Tolerance Day event had been held on 6 June 2023 and had been well attended by SACRE members.
- Item 21 – the financial figures had been amended in consultation with Clive Haines.

KH

ALL

6 Exam Results 2022

The members present reviewed the GCSE exam results that had been circulated. It was noted that Altwood and Churchmead had high percentages of their cohort sitting the exam. The Chair observed that the data was interesting

relating to Furze Platt Senior which had seen a significant drop in the number of students taking RE from 95% to 18% in 2022. It was noted that Charters' entry numbers were also on a downward trend and members discussed whether the recovery from the pandemic was still a factor affecting schools. Overall it was recognised that RBWM's cohort and results were above national levels but were not where the SACRE members would prefer this to be.

A discussion followed on how to approach schools to explore the reasons behind the data and understand the current trends. Although the attendees all agreed that it would be useful to find out more, there was a consensus that recent school years had been so turbulent that the timing would not be right. Clive Haines advised that the local authority would not be comfortable leading such an approach at this time as they were undertaking a series of professional consultations with schools.

The meeting considered the A Level results, noting that they were numbers and not percentages. There had been a drop in the number of candidates from 102 to 61 students.

The Chair asked for SACRE's thanks to be passed to the data team for sharing the information.

ACTION: CH to thank data team

CH

7 Membership Update

The Chair advised the meeting that there were two vacancies for the Free Churches and asked that all SACRE members pass on any suggestions for potential Baptist, Quaker, Plymouth Brethren or other Free Church representatives to her for contact to be made.

As discussed at the previous meeting, there were Headteacher vacancies and as there was no requirement to have the posts be represented by secondary schools and several attempts had been made to do this, without success, it was suggested that primary representatives be recruited. One Primary Headteacher could fill one of the vacancies and the other vacancy could be filled by a representative from an Academy School. The Chair explained that the SACRE self-assessment evaluation had identified that SACRE needed to formalise links with Academies.

The Chair welcomed the three new Councillor representatives to SACRE and noted that the new position for Anthony Lewis would be resolved soon.

8 SACRE Development Plan Progress Report

The Chair introduced the SACRE Development Plan and then talked through progress in each area:

Key Area 1a – Funding: Professional and financial support

The Chair advised that there were currently no funding proposals as the budget was not yet spent. She noted that in relation to development costs there was potential for additional budget to be required.

Key Area 1e – Information and advice

The RBWM self-assessment system, based on the national REQM award, was currently being trialled in three schools. It was recognised that these things take time to become embedded and to provide useful data.

Key Area 1g – Relations with the Academies sector

The Chair explained that this had been RAG rated red as there was currently no Headteacher representation from an Academy but as previously discussed this was being progressed.

Priority A2 – Arising from SACRE Self-assessment tool

Laura Dexter commented that the self-assessment tool offered a universal approach to auditing RE. Barbara Meaney and Clare Roberts also spoke positively of the impact of this approach to assessment which they were sharing with other staff.

Laura Dexter reported that at the RE Network meeting, the tool had engaged attendees. She suggested that a 'Top Tips' page could be created to help colleagues to use it. Pupil RE Ambassadors were being deployed within her school who were helping her to create a scrapbook to collect examples of evidence. The tool was also helping to capture the voice of the child.

Barbara Meaney explained that for those considering working towards the RE Quality Mark, the self-assessment tool had been developed using a simplified version of the Quality Mark criteria to help schools move towards achieving the national qualification.

The Chair asked if the scrapbook could be shared at a future meeting to help SACRE members see how it was being used. It was acknowledged that RE was a huge subject area and there were fewer resources available for subject leads.

Anne Andrews advised that all SACRE newsletters highlight where to find resource information and what else was available.

Laura Dexter added that the self-assessment tool had been used to help identify staff development needs and that the approach she was taking was focusing on one strand before moving on to another.

Anne Andrews proposed that this could be a topic of discussion at the Autumn term network meeting.

Barbara Meaney advised that she was meeting with Thomas Kingsley-Jones to develop the self-assessment for Key Stage 3 and perhaps also Key Stage 4.

Clare Roberts reiterated how useful the self-assessment tool had been. She liked the idea of having RE Ambassadors within the school and endorsed the fact that it was a useful framework for looking at CPD for teachers. She commented that some teachers lack confidence in certain faiths and were worried about promoting misconceptions or making a faux pas.

Clare suggested that it might be discussed at a future Cluster meeting to share the approach across different schools. Anne Andrews agreed and that the process of researching and presenting to the meeting, of itself, provided an opportunity to upskill people.

Laura Dexter explained that the assessment tool at her school was also focussed on the Early Years.

Barbara Meaney updated the meeting that at her school, St. Edward's RF Ecumenical Middle, they were building towards Quality Mark and using the self-assessment tool to highlight areas for staff CPD. Her Year 7 and 8 pupils worked through the self-assessment tool with her.

The Chair discussed the action on page 17 relating to SACRE's role in auditing Collective Worship in all schools and how the information could be gathered. It was noted that the NASCRE website has resources and information about approaches that other Las had taken to do this and SACRE could learn from this.

Anne Andrews reflected that as there were good levels of responses from SACRE areas where schools were geographically close together, it was easier to glean information. RBWM's schools covered a larger area and were all very different so this presents a greater challenge for us.

In response to an enquiry from Cllr Douglas, it was explained that SACRE had no direct contact with parents or pupils or even schools so surveys would need to be undertaken via the local authority. Clive Haines added that the local authority also relied upon schools and their newsletters to communicate with families. He explained that they were currently undertaking the 'Deliver Better Value' programme and a number of surveys were being undertaken so it was not a good time to pursue this.

9 Feedback from teachers

Dai Prendiville reported that the charity 'Solutions not Sides' were running sessions with Year 12 students explaining the history of the situation and this would be followed up by conflict resolution. He explained that a Palestine / Israeli visitor would be attending to answer their questions. A new GCSE RE group had started and they would be visiting All Saints next week to participate in a Eucharist.

Dai Prendiville confirmed that he was the only RE teacher at his school so he taught all of Key Stage 3, the new GCSE cohort as well as another options class. He was currently exploring whether he could co-ordinate RE within Key Stage 4 if delivered by others. He reported that 45 pupils had been involved in the first 'Solutions not Sides' session and this would be rolled out.

ACTION: Dai Prendiville to create an article about 'Solutions not Sides' for inclusion in a future newsletter.

DP

Barbara Meaney explained that her school were working toward achieving Quality mark before the summer term. Year 8 transfer exams were currently underway, they were preparing data ready for the transfer process and preparing for students joining them in September.

Clare Roberts reported that it was currently all about transitions and moving on at her school. Their Year 6 students were preparing for their residential trip and the school as being moderated in Key Stage 1. She reported that it was the last year that Key Stage 2 would be undertaking SATs.

Laura Dexter explained that they were very busy helping students prepare for the move to the Junior School which although was only across the road still caused some stress. She added they were attending their first Mosque visit with her Year 2 group going to Maidenhead which would be followed by a trip to a synagogue by her Year 1 students.

ACTION: Laura Dexter to create an article about the trips for inclusion in a future newsletter.

LD

10 Feedback from NASACRE Conference 2023 & AGM

The Chair thanked Barbara Meaney for sharing the notes from the NASACRE Conference.

She highlighted a quote from a speech made by Charles Clarke (the Patron of NASCRE) that emphasised the unique role that SACRE had in each LA and how that might be used to promote cultural and religious diversity, tolerance and respect. *'SACRE needs to maximise its strengths...How should we go forward after the general election? (Both political parties are keen to be more proactive re Community Cohesion and SACRE has a role to play.) SACREs must set out the roles they have in promoting interfaith dialogue...'*

Anne Andrews had attended the AGM as part of the NASACRE Executive.

The Chair explained that the fee to attend included virtual workshops and there were eight sessions. Between the attendees, six of the eight would be covered. Culham St. Gabriel's had run a session about how they could support RE and she had left inspired with lots of notes about how they support teachers, run scholarship programmes, offer CPD for teachers and campaign briefings. There were two further workshops coming up.

Barbara Meaney had attended a session on how Sacred Texts support learning in RE and a link had been shared. Anne Andrews confirmed that all the links would be available on the NASACRE website and she would signpost members to the relevant area.

ACTION: Laurence Ellis to update the NASCRE training list.

LE

11 Training opportunities/events

The Chair advised that NASACRE was holding a training event on 26 June 2023 title: 'So you joined your local SACRE?' New members were encouraged to contact Laurence Ellis to sign up to attend.

ACTION: New SACRE members to make contact with Laurence Ellis to book a place on this training

New members

An RE network meeting had taken place at Furze Platt Infant School.

12 Budget update

Clive Haines advised the meeting that he did not have a full budget report to share. It was noted that £6,200 had been allocated but after the subscriptions for professional support there was £2,500 left to be spent. Once the report was available this would be shared with SACRE members.

13 Ofsted/SIAMS reports

The Chair had circulated the latest SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) report for Eton Wick School to SACRE members and contacted the headteacher to advise her that it was going to be discussed at the meeting. The Chair had congratulated the Headteacher and her leadership team for the positive comments within the report. The headteacher had been thrilled by the outcome of the one-day inspection. The Chair had been invited to visit the school and would discuss the possibility of Miss Karen Waller joining SACRE as a Headteacher representative.

Anne Andrews advised that Eton Wick School was a Voluntary Controlled

school and therefore the RE curriculum was based on the locally agreed syllabus.

As Ofsted reports for the six schools that had been inspected during the year had not commented specifically on RE, the Chair had produced a summary of outcomes and quoted from various parts of the reports, picking up positive comments about pupils' behaviour, kindness, personal development and understanding of inclusion.

Anne Andrews reported that Lowbrook Academy, as part of their Ofsted inspection, had undergone a 'deep dive' into RE and been assessed overall as good. In response to a query about LA attendance at the feedback, Clive Haines advised that as Lowbrook was an Academy the local authority was not invited to attend the Ofsted feedback session.

ACTION: Chair to approach the Headteacher at Lowbrook to discuss the possibility of joining SACRE as an Academy representative.

KB

14 Pan-Berkshire Hub Update

As a preliminary activity to begin the forthcoming syllabus review, Anne Andrews advised that she had set up conversations between a number of faith groups involving colleagues from SACREs across Berkshire to discuss those aspects of the faith that should be covered in the new syllabus. She had chaired some and so had the RBWM Chair. It had not been possible to arrange for a Buddhist discussion as there were few Buddhists on the other SACREs.

She added that members of all six SACREs had had extracts from three different syllabuses to compare and that feedback would be discussed at the next Hub meeting.

She noted that the 'Real People, Real Faith' project was concluding with the NATRE films now available and being uploaded to the website. There were two films for each religion at each key stage. Each film used questions from each key stage of the syllabus and there were notes to support teachers' use of these available alongside.

15 Feedback from syllabus comparison exercise

The Chair thanked the six respondents who had replied to the syllabus comparison exercise and encouraged others to contribute before the beginning of July.

ACTION: SACRE members to complete this exercise and return paperwork to Anne Andrews before July 1st

ALL

16 Setting up an Agreed Syllabus Conference

Anne Andrews explained to the meeting that the local authority needed to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference whose membership would be exactly the same as SACRE meetings unless nominating bodies wished to send someone else to attend. In practice, future SACRE meeting business would be reduced as scheduled meetings would be cut into two parts in order to consider the syllabus.

ACTION: All representatives to confirm with their nominating bodies who would be the representative.

ALL

17 Any Other Business

The Chair noted that this was the last SACRE meeting of the academic year and also the final meeting being attended by Hilary Harris who was resigning after being a member for 25 years, representing Judaism. Hilary reflected that it had been really interesting work and it had been a pleasure to have been able to contribute to SACRE. Everyone present joined the Chair and applauded her to show their appreciation for Hilary's energy and commitment. Before the meeting closed, she agreed to ask for a nomination from the synagogue for her replacement.

ACTION: HH to speak to Rabbi Romain about the nomination of a Jewish representative to replace her.

HH

18 Dates Of Future Meetings

Laura Dexter agreed to host the next meeting at Furze Platt Infant School, Maidenhead.

SACRE attendees noted future meeting dates:

- Monday 11 September 2023 – Furze Platt Infant School, Maidenhead.
- Monday 4 December 2023 (Virtual via Zoom)
- Monday 4 March 2024

The meeting, which began at 5.30 pm, ended at 6.45 pm