

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

13 September 2021

PRESENT: Michael Gammage (Chairman), Karen Butler (Vice-Chairman), Chris Sayers, Saghir Ahmed, Margaret Dudley, Hilary Harris, Anthony Lewis, Barbara Meaney, Richard Rhodes, Maggie Callaghan, Thomas Kingsley-Jones, Sarah Bradley, Councillor Donna Stimson, Councillor Julian Sharpe and Councillor Shamsul Shelim

Also in attendance: Councillor Gurpreet Bhangra and Councillor Mandy Brar

Officers in attendance: Mark Beeley and Anne Andrews

ACTION

1 Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

Barbara Meaney proposed Michael Gammage for the position of Chairman, this was seconded by Margaret Dudley.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Michael Gammage was elected Chairman of SACRE for the 2021/22 academic year.

Barbara Meaney proposed Karen Butler for the position of Vice Chairman, this was seconded by Michael Gammage.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Karen Butler was elected Vice Chairman of SACRE for the 2021/22 academic year.

2 Welcome

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

3 Reflection

Saghir Ahmed gave the opening reflection from a Muslim perspective.

4 Apologies For Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Darcy Chesterfield-Terry, Ravinder Singh, Clive Haines, Clare Roberts and Ila Gangotra.

5 Membership Update

The Chairman confirmed that Sally Lynch had stepped down from SACRE, as had Louise Ceska due to her retirement.

Maggie Callaghan had joined SACRE as the new BASH representative and the Chairman welcomed her to the meeting.

Karen Butler expressed concern that there were a number of vacancies on the SACRE membership which had been vacant for some time.

ACTION – Mark Beeley to circulate the latest membership list to members and ask that if anyone was interested, or knew anyone that would be interested, to get in touch.

Anne Andrews said that she had emailed for Sally Lynch's replacement but had not yet heard back. She would do a follow up email to the RE network to see if anyone was interested.

6 Minutes Of Meeting on 17/06/21

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17th June 2021 were approved, providing the following amendment was made:

- In the Forward Plan agenda item, it was noted that Barbara Meaney was part of the discussions along with the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Anne Andrews.

Karen Butler asked if there had been an update on developing a system to track the number of people who had watched the films on the NATRE website.

Anne Andrews explained that NATRE staff had been off over the summer but she would look into it. She confirmed that the funding from the disbanding of the Reading Faith Forum had been received, which would be used for the next set of films.

ACTION – Anne Andrews to speak to NATRE about whether the number of people watching the films could be tracked.

Karen Butler asked if the latest SACRE newsletter had been sent out to schools and whether Clare Roberts had received it.

Richard Rhodes confirmed that schools had received the newsletter.

7 Forward Plan

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the order of agenda items was changed, so that the Forward Plan was considered first.

The Chairman explained that he had worked with Karen Butler, Anne Andrews and Barbara Meaney on the plan, which had been attached to the agenda. They were happy to take any ideas that SACRE members had and incorporate them into the forward plan.

The Chairman shared his screen so that members could see the document and he talked through each section of the plan.

Councillor Sharpe said it was a good piece of work and asked to what extent would the plan be supported by schools.

Barbara Meaney said that some teachers were constantly monitoring RE, the problem was getting all teachers to do it. The plan should be viewed in a positive light, SACRE was there to support teachers.

Richard Rhodes said the sharing of information was not the problem but RE did vary from school to school. The leadership forum was a good place for the forward plan to be discussed as headteachers could talk through any issues.

Maggie Callaghan said that the actions were the hardest bit. It did depend on how RE was delivered, the plan would allow SACRE to understand the level of commitment to RE in schools.

Thomas Kingsley-Jones mentioned the quality of monitoring of RE in schools and that there could often be a 'fear' associated with monitoring but it did not have to be like that. Constructive criticism would be good to help improvement.

Sarah Bradley said that teacher networks were great, monitoring would take different levels as some schools did not value RE as much as other schools.

Anthony Lewis asked how the plan could be inclusive of non-religious elements.

Anne Andrews explained that collective worship enabled all to join as everyone was invited, although it was not compulsory. Schools were encouraged to be thought provoking rather than leading pupils to believe in a particular set of beliefs.

Hilary Harris said that the objectives seemed clear, she was interested in how the mechanics of the funding for the plan would work.

The Chairman said that SACRE wanted to see more action and that it played a key role in ensuring the quality of RE in schools was a high level.

Margaret Dudley said that the plan looked really good.

The Chairman asked SACRE members to provide any further feedback in the next couple of weeks.

Anne Andrews mentioned the survey which was due to be sent out to secondary teachers. She asked if SACRE approved of the questions being asked.

The Chairman suggested it would be useful to show the questions to Maggie Callaghan, who was attending her first SACRE meeting. It was agreed that the questions would be circulated to all SACRE members after the meeting.

ACTION – Mark Beeley to circulate secondary school teachers survey questions to SACRE members after the meeting.

Councillor Sharpe said consideration needed to be given on how the plan would be delivered to ensure that it was carried out effectively.

8 Visits to schools

Anthony Lewis said that he had a booking to go into LVS in Ascot, he felt that schools were beginning to make contact again after the pandemic.

9 NASACRE Training Offer

Anne Andrews explained that NASACRE were providing an extensive training programme, with the details for each event being provided in the agenda. SACRE were looking to take advantage of an offer where for a one-off fee, an unlimited number of SACRE members could attend training events.

The first session was on Thursday 23rd September 2021 and was an introduction for those who had recently joined SACRE. If anyone was interested, they should email mark.beeley@rbwm.gov.uk.

10 NASACRE/NATRE RE Data

Anne Andrews explained that the data had been compiled from results from the exams earlier in the summer. The percentage of pupils entering for the full RE course was only 23% in RBWM compared to 39% nationally. The school workforce data had been circulated separately, which investigated whether pupils achieved good levels of attainment where large numbers of pupils had been entered onto the RE course. There was a link between the number of entries and grade levels, the higher number of entries, the higher percentage of good grades. Some schools had a very limited offering of RE, Anne Andrews had discussed this with the relevant representatives on SACRE. The figures were fairly consistent and it was clear that some schools were not offering RE correctly.

Chris Sayers, Maggie Callaghan and Councillor Shelim left the meeting.

Karen Butler said that the NATRE data was very powerful, it was interesting to see that there was a link with more people taking RE meaning there was a better probability of higher grades. She suggested that it would be good to take the findings to a BASH meeting.

Anne Andrews added that where senior leaders supported RE, better RE was taught. She said that she would be happy to attend a BASH meeting to discuss the findings.

Councillor Stimson said that children had the right to feel safe and she felt that those schools that were not offering good quality RE were letting the side down. It was important to discover why schools were missing out.

The Chairman agreed that all members echoed Councillor Stimson's concerns. The world was multi-religious and RE played a key role in equipping children in how to handle the world.

Richard Rhodes believed that RE was there to help children become aware of things and explore new ideas.

Anne Andrews said that it was important to understand that it was not about criticising schools, SACRE wanted to help them to deliver a good quality of education. It was about helping children prepare for living in a multi-secular world.

Saghir Ahmed left the meeting.

11 NATRE commentary on GCSE examination entry and results

This was considered as part of the item above.

12 Update from Thomas Kingsley-Jones and Darcy Chesterfield-Terry on the church filming project

Thomas Kingsley-Jones gave an update on the filming project with Darcy Chesterfield-Terry. The first film was complete and had the title 'a conversation with' and was based around a conversation about Christianity. It looked to mirror the content of the RE course. They were looking to film the next part in due course.

The Chairman said it was a great initiative and that he looked forward to seeing the film.

13 SACRE Newsletter

Anne Andrews said that the newsletter had been sent to all schools and SACRE members and was also included in the agenda pack. She said it would be great if members could send her items of interest for inclusion in future newsletters. It could also be a good opportunity to showcase some of the work which was taking place in schools.

Karen Butler said that the newsletter was very informative and that it included a number of links to useful resources. She had been able to join the recent RE primary network meeting. The topics discussed had been summarised in the newsletter along with some worked examples, which was really helpful.

14 Update from July Hub Meeting

Karen Butler said that a significant amount of time had been spent discussing the syllabus review and that it was important to be flexible on timings. The issue of funding was also discussed and whether SACREs would be able to support the Hub, Anne Andrews would be working with other advisors on this. Questions had been framed which would be sent out to schools to understand what needed to be changed about the current syllabus.

Anne Andrews explained that on the timeline of the syllabus review, the Hub agreed that it needed to be fluid. It was planned for the survey to be sent out at some point in October which would focus on the syllabus review. Nothing would be finalised until the survey data had been analysed, SACREs could then decide what the best approach was. The review was due to take place in 2023 and would be funded from the existing contributions each SACRE paid to the Hub.

Another update from the Hub was that new films would be produced from the Catholic church, the Hub had been given £2,000 by the Reading Faith Forum so more films were planned.

15 Any Other Business

There was no other business.

16 Dates Of Future Meetings

The next SACRE meeting would take place on Thursday 9th December 2021, starting at 6pm.

The meeting, which began at 6.00 pm, ended at 7.40 pm

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

9 December 2021

PRESENT: Michael Gammage (Chairman), Karen Butler (Vice-Chairman), Ravinder Singh Zandu, Chris Sayers, Darcy Chesterfield-Terry, Margaret Dudley, Anthony Lewis, Barbara Meaney, Councillor Donna Stimson and Councillor Julian Sharpe

Officers in attendance: Clive Haines, Anne Andrews and Mark Beeley

ACTION

1 Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and explained that the meeting was not quorate, due to their being no representatives present from Group C – Teachers. The meeting would therefore defer any decisions to be made until the next meeting in March 2022.

2 Reflection

The reflection was led by Karen Butler.

3 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Ila Gangotra, Councillor Shelim, Sarah Bradley, Thomas Kingsley-Jones, Hilary Harris, Maggie Callaghan, Clare Roberts and Richard Rhodes.

4 Minutes of Meeting on 13/09/21

As the meeting was not quorate, the approval of the minutes was deferred to the next meeting.

5 Membership Update

Mark Beeley, Democratic Services, read out an email from Richard Rhodes. He would be leaving the area and therefore would be stepping down from his role on SACRE. Members of SACRE passed on their thanks to Richard for all his work over the past couple of years.

6 Budget Update

Clive Haines, School Leadership Development Manager, explained the total budget allocated for SACRE was £6,260. £850 had been spent on supplies and services, while £4,450 had been spent on professional services and consultancies. This meant that there was a total spend of £5,215, there was £1,045 left in the budget for the rest of the financial year.

7 SACRE Annual Report 2020/21

Anne Andrews said that there was a new template for the annual report which linked in with the new self-evaluation tool. The report would be analysed by NASACRE and the Department for Education so that the executive could get a better picture of what was happening on the ground. Anne Andrews had written the report and a copy of it was attached to the agenda. It related to the last

academic year and was usually considered by SACRE at the first meeting of the academic year, but this year it had come to a later meeting. The attendance details and budget information still needed to be added to the report. Anne Andrews asked if SACRE Members could read the report and let her know of any changes or amendments, it was proposed that the report would be submitted by the end of February 2022. It was suggested that approval for the report could be sought by email in the new year.

The Chairman read out part of the Chairman's introduction, which would be included at the start of the annual report.

Karen Butler noted that the meeting was not quorate and questioned how the annual report could be signed off before it needed to be submitted.

The Chairman confirmed that the report would be circulated to SACRE Members by email so that they could comment and agree the report before it was submitted.

8 REQM Gold Award

Anne Andrews informed Members that REQM stood for Religious Education Quality Mark and was an award overseen and supported by the Religious Education Council. Schools needed to complete a self-evaluation table and took part in a mini inspection which specifically looked at the RE department. Those schools which were considered to have an excellent quality of teaching were awarded the REQM gold award. In March 2021, Churchmead School received the gold award and two RE teachers at the school were also Members of SACRE, Thomas Kingsley-Jones and Sarah Bradley. Another school in RBWM had also received the gold award in 2018 but this was under different leadership. Anne Andrews suggested that the Chairman of SACRE wrote a letter to Churchmead to congratulate them on the achievement.

The Chairman confirmed that he would write a letter of congratulations to the school, a copy would be circulated to SACRE Members once it had been sent out.

ACTION – Mike Gammage to write a letter of congratulations to Churchmead School.

9 Ofsted/SIAMS Reports

Clive Haines explained that there had been reports but there was no mention of RE as the reports were now a lot shorter. If RE was mentioned, it would be in the feedback to the school rather than in the published report.

Anne Andrews added that there had been no SIAMs inspections in RBWM since they resumed in October 2021.

Clive Haines said that 97% of schools in the borough were rated either good or outstanding, Ofsted therefore felt that there was a good level of curriculum being taught.

Anne Andrews asked if it was possible for Clive Haines to see if there had been any 'deep dives' into RE from any recent Ofsted inspections.

Clive Haines confirmed that a deep dive on RE had not yet taken place.

10 Feedback or suggestions from teachers

Barbara Meaney said that she had been trying to balance in person and online teaching as a number of children had been off ill. It was a very difficult and busy time for all teachers.

Anne Andrews agreed that teachers were on their knees, it was a challenging time.

11 Feedback from school visits

Anthony Lewis said that he had visited one school to give a talk which consisted of a one hour assembly and Q&A session with around 200 sixth formers at the LVS School. Due to the changing Covid situation, January 2022 visits had been suspended. Anthony Lewis had also spoken at a school in Reading and a school in Bracknell, with some interesting and challenging discussions taking place.

12 Update on Development of Secondary RE Network

Anne Andrews said that Clive Haines had sent out a questionnaire to schools on the network but only six replies had been received. Five said that they would be interested in an RE network but three of the responses said that they were currently too busy to participate in a potential network. Headteachers needed more time before a new network was launched. Some schools in the borough had not seen the survey and so Anne Andrews needed to consider how this was done in future.

13 SACRE Development Plan to Summer 2023: Update on approval by RBWM

Clive Haines said that a briefing paper would need to be produced on the proposals SACRE had set out as part of their development plan. Services were being cut and the Department for Education were cutting grant funding which was available to the council, this meant that some services were under pressure.

The Chairman explained that the plan had come out of a three-month long consultation and was put together to show what the minimum was that SACRE needed to do to be effective. It would double the budget which was a significant increase, but it was felt this increase was needed for SACRE to properly fulfil its mandate.

Clive Haines confirmed that some other SACREs within Berkshire received a much smaller budget than RBWM.

Anne Andrews said that nationally it was a different picture, the RBWM SACRE had half the budget of many others across the country.

The Chairman said that he understood the pressures on resources and services that the council currently faced.

Councillor Stimson had a suggestion that the Spoore, Merry and Rixman Foundation could be approached for funding but this was a Maidenhead charity and SACRE represented the whole borough.

Anne Andrews said that as the SACRE self-assessment tool was used, other ways to achieve items on the development plan could still happen without

needing the increased budget. A lot of the plan was still possible without additional funding.

14 Update on Pan-Berkshire Hub collaboration

Karen Butler said that the Pan Berkshire hub had a meeting coming up. A lot of the focus would be around the timings for the syllabus review and how it would be carried out.

Barbara Meaney said that she recently attended the hub filming session at a Mosque in Reading.

Anthony Lewis commented on the update to the curriculum, he was pleased with the Pan Berkshire syllabus as it included the non-religious world view. He had read an executive summary of the report which had been produced. Anthony Lewis asked how much of the report would be fed into the syllabus review.

Anne Andrews said that the report had mentioned world views but this did not necessarily mean that more information needed to be put in. It was an acknowledgment that we lived in a multi-religious and multi-secular society. Anne Andrews did not anticipate that the requirement for pupils to learn about a non-religious world view would be removed. It was important for teachers and SACRE Members to be involved in the creation and revision of the syllabus.

On the films, Anne Andrews said that a film had been created in the Orthodox Synagogue in Reading and there were plans for a film in the Orthodox Christian Church, also in Reading, after Christmas. There were plans for a Humanist film, in collaboration with the Humanist representative from Bracknell. Work was being done to increase the number of films, notes were currently being written with Barbara Meaney on the Catholic films.

Anthony Lewis said that teachers were very busy from the conversations that he had had with them, it could be a challenge to ensure the depth was covered.

Anne Andrews agreed that it would be a challenge. There was a NASACRE training event in the spring on world views, once this date was confirmed she would let SACRE Members know. SACRE had paid a one-off fee so that all Members could attend training events from NASACRE for no additional cost.

Karen Butler asked if the sessions were recorded.

Anne Andrews confirmed that all sessions were recorded and were available to SACREs that were members of NASACRE.

15 SACRE Newsletter January 2022

Anne Andrews appealed to SACRE Members that if there was anything that anyone wanted to include in the newsletter, to email her. It could be something happening in the community or anything that could be helpful for RE teachers, any suggestions were welcome.

16 Any Other Business

Karen Butler commented on the use of the SACRE self-assessment tool. She felt it was important that this tool was revisited so that SACRE Members could familiarise themselves with the criteria. Karen Butler asked what

NASACRE thought SACREs should do with the tool.

Anne Andrews said that there would be a session on the self-assessment tool at the NASACRE AGM in 2022. Lots of SACREs were considering one section of the tool at each meeting. If there was anything that needed to be considered, this could then be fed into the development plan. It was something to consider, it could be added to the agenda for the next SACRE meeting in March 2022. Members could then see what SACRE was good at and what it could improve on.

The Chairman said that there could be a discussion at the next meeting in March on whether SACRE Members wanted to use the self-assessment tool. SACRE had invested many hours, over several meetings between 2015 and 2017, on completing an earlier version of the NASACRE Self-Assessment Toolkit. Despite all those discussions and ensuing reports, almost nothing had changed, other than that the number of SACRE meetings had increased from three to four per year. The central conclusion from that self-assessment exercise was that SACRE could not advance and become more effective without significant additional resources. This was an important underpinning to the SACRE plan to 2023.

Anne Andrews said that the tool had been circulated to SACRE Members alongside the agenda, it could not be included due to accessibility requirements which were now required for all documents published on the RBWM website. Anne Andrews said that she would feed this back to NASACRE.

ACTION – Anne Andrews to inform NASACRE that the self-assessment tool did not meet accessibility requirements and therefore could not be published in the agenda or on the council’s website.

17 Dates of Future Meetings

The Chairman explained that SACRE had been advised by RBWM Full Council to hold meetings virtually, with one per year to be held in person. It had been suggested that the summer meeting could be held in person and asked if any SACRE Members would be interested in providing a venue.

Barbara Meaney said that she was happy to volunteer her school, St Edwards, and the Catholic Church in Windsor.

Karen Butler suggested that it would be good to hold the meeting at Churchmead School, after the success of their REQM gold award.

Anne Andrews notified SACRE Members that there was a training session run by NASACRE on 18th January 2022 from 7pm-8pm on how to be an effective Chairman. On 21st February 2022 from 7pm-8pm there was a session on world views. There were further sessions in March and June, but the exact dates of these sessions had not yet been confirmed. The March session was to be held on the self-assessment tool and therefore it was advised that some Members of SACRE could attend this session.

SACRE Members noted that the next meeting would be held on Thursday 24th March 2022, starting at 6pm.

The meeting, which began at 6.00 pm, ended at 7.15 pm