

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION HELD AT EASTHAMPSTEAD HOUSE, BRACKNELL ON
14 NOVEMBER 2006
(5.00 - 6.36 pm)**

Present:

- Free Churches:
 - Reverend Michael Bentley
 - Mrs Paula Ridgway
 - Mrs Irene Robinson
- Roman Catholic Churches:
 - Mrs Louise Birley
 - Mrs Anne Gibbons
- Other Religions:
 - Dr Kathy Hadfield
 - Mrs Kusum Trikha
- Church of England:
 - Mr Gordon Anderson
 - Councillor Mrs Maureen Beadsley
 - Mrs Julie Graham
- Bracknell Forest LEA:
 - Councillor Mrs Dorothy Hayes
 - Councillor Cliff Thompson
- Associations Representing Teachers:
 - Mrs Kathleen Nugent
- Observer:
 - Mrs Felicity Allen

Apologies for absence were received from:

Mr D Fawcett, Mr C Hickson, Mrs S Hunt, Mrs G Ledsham and Councillor
Mrs J Ryder

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Gordon Anderson welcomed all those present at the meeting. Julie Graham read the prayer "Celtic Benediction" (attached to these minutes).

2. Election of Chairman (clerk in the chair)

RESOLVED that Gordon Anderson be elected as Chairman of SACRE for the academic year 2006/07.

3. Appointment of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED that Louise Birley be elected as Vice-chairman of SACRE for the academic year 2006/07.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2006 (attached)

The minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 15 June 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment:

Minute 26 – the name of Irene Robinson needed correcting.

5. **Matters arising**

The meeting was advised that the notes written by Jo Fageant in relation to the Berkshire SACRE's conference on 6 June 2006 had been circulated by Gordon Anderson as agreed.

6. **SACRE membership**

Gordon Anderson welcomed two new attendees: Felicity Allen, the representative nominated by the NAS/UWT, who was attending as an observer for this meeting, and should be officially appointed as the NAS/UWT representative to SACRE by the next meeting.

Martin Surrell, Senior Advisor for Education, Children's Services & Libraries who attended to establish the level of support provided by Nasir Sabir, who was moving on to a new position with Leicester City Council at Christmas. The meeting expressed its thanks to Nasir for his valuable contribution to the work of SACRE and wished him well in his new role.

7. **New Agreed Syllabus launch and initial comments - RE Coordinators' meeting feedback**

The meeting was advised that the launch of the New Agreed Syllabus for RE had been well attended and had gone smoothly. 24 of the 30 primary schools and 4 of the 6 secondary schools had attended on the day and all of the Bracknell Forest schools had received a copy of the new Agreed Syllabus. Feedback at the end of the launch training day had pointed to the substantial amount of work to be done to implement the Syllabus, however it was acknowledged that its introduction could be very gradual and it was also stressed that the Syllabus was a tool for schools and teachers to make their own. The need to share ideas and resources was also highlighted.

The RE Co-ordinators meeting following the launch produced a topic framework for Key Stages 1 and 2. The September meeting produced lots of ideas for teaching activities and three teachers had produced medium term plans for the introduction of the Agreed Syllabus, which they were happy to share with all schools. Possible incentives to encourage such work in future were highlighted as an issue and the meeting agreed to write to the three teachers involved to thank them for their work and provide evidence of the substantial contribution their work had made to the development of RE within Bracknell Forest. The intention was that as well as being an expression of gratitude from SACRE, the teachers in question could use this letter as evidence to contribute to their portfolios for the Performance Thresholds for Teachers.

(ACTION: Julie Graham/Gordon Anderson)

The meeting was advised that the Agreed syllabus was published on the Bracknell Forest website (BORIS), as a link from the SACRE webpage. The previously discussed possible appendix on Humanism had been resubmitted and work was ongoing with Jo Fageant to provide an appendix compatible with the rest of the Syllabus.

8. **Artefacts update and review - Proposal to purchase books**

The meeting considered a tabled paper which showed the number of times the SACRE artefacts had been loaned to schools for the period Spring Term 2004 to Autumn Term 2006. Use of the artefacts had peaked in the Summer Term of 2005,

since when their use had been disappointing. The meeting considered possible reasons for this:

- The Artefacts Catalogue launch in autumn 2005 may be being used as a tool, rather than the artefacts themselves.
- The training provided by Sam Hunt had in the past focussed upon using such resources to plan lessons, however this had more recently changed to consideration of more strategic issues.
- Records had only been kept for substantial loans and it could be that the artefacts were being used more as individual pieces which would not have been recorded – smaller loans would therefore be recorded in future.

It was agreed that further investigation of such issues should be pursued, particularly via the RE Co-ordinators meetings.

(ACTION: Nasir Sabir/Sam Hunt)

The meeting was asked to authorise spending on the following items:

- Replacement of a small number of artefacts which were broken
- Books and DVDs on Christmas and Christianity requested by Kennel Lane School (although it was observed that the artefacts collection should not become a library).
- A new book and CD Rom entitled “Science and Religion in Schools”.

The meeting agreed to the above purchases and asked that the Heads of Science be advised of the provision of the latter item, as well as RE Co-ordinators.

(ACTION: Nasir Sabir)

The meeting also asked that the next RE Co-ordinators meeting be given the opportunity to advise of any additional items if believed should be part of the artefacts collection.

(ACTION: Sam Hunt)

9. Examination statistics for the academic year 2005/2006

The meeting considered a tabled paper which provided headline statistics for examination grades achieved by Bracknell Forest schools in RE in 2005/06. It was advised that the figures were provisional, to be confirmed in January 2007, when it was hoped that more detailed figures could be made available to SACRE. Overall, the results were good, with 746 of approximately 1100 pupils taking either the GCSE full course or short course, with 75.3% attaining grades A-C for the former and 40% attaining grades A-C for the latter. Take up of RE at A Level was low, with 35 pupils entered across the Borough. It was agreed that the statistics be considered in more detail at the next SACRE meeting.

(ACTION: Nasir Sabir/Tina Stevenson)

10. Berkshire SACREs' Conference 2007

Gordon Anderson advised that Jo Fageant had asked him to canvass the opinion of SACRE members as to whether they would like a Berkshire SACREs' Conference in 2007, and if yes, what topic/focus would be of most interest. The meeting agreed that it valued the conferences as they provided an opportunity to focus on national issues and would like one to run in 2007. If the conference went ahead, it was probable that Mark Chater, the QCA curriculum advisor could be invited and the meeting felt that further consideration of Self Evaluation Forums (SEFs), as touched

upon at the previous conference would be helpful. Gordon Anderson advised that he was shortly to attend a conference for SACRE chairmen titled "Strong SACRES, Good RE", for which he had completed a SEF, in conjunction with Louise Birley. The meeting was advised that on the basis of this SEF, the Bracknell Forest SACRE was on the whole performing well, although it was felt that some of the criteria detailed for the advanced category of achievement by SACREs were too aspirational, given the advisory nature of SACREs and constraints experienced by them.

Further discussion raised two issues:

- The difficulties posed by the lack of information available to SACREs, particularly the lack of access to the RE toolkit SEF completed by schools, for its advising and supporting role.
- The need to provide a more structured induction pack for new Bracknell Forest SACRE members.

(ACTION: Gordon Anderson/Tina Stevenson)

The meeting was advised that Gordon would provide members with feedback from the conference

11. The perceptions of RE in schools - a discussion

The meeting was advised that Gill Ledsham had raised the perception of RE in schools as an issue at the last SACRE meeting and it had been agreed to discuss it further at this meeting. A brief discussion highlighted the lack of understanding of the teaching of RE, particularly in faith schools. However, Gill Ledsham had been unable to attend this meeting, so it was agreed to reconsider this issue more fully at a future SACRE meeting.

12. Raising the profile of SACRE

In view of the forthcoming conferences and workshops, it was agreed that consideration of this issue be moved to the next meeting.

(ACTION: Gordon Anderson/Tina Stevenson)

13. Bracknell Forest SACRE's Annual Report 2005/06

The meeting was advised that the Annual Report was work in progress, to be completed by the end of the year. It was agreed that when it was complete, the draft Annual Report be emailed to SACRE members for comment, prior to submission to QCA.

(ACTION: Gordon Anderson/Louise Birley/Nasir Sabir)

14. Any other business

Julie Graham advised of her retirement both as a Head Teacher and from the SACRE at the end of the 2007 Summer Term. It was agreed that Gordon Anderson approach the Oxford Church of England Diocese for a nomination to fill the resulting vacancy, ideally with another Head Teacher as this provided a very useful perspective for SACRE meetings.

A pink folder had been left at the last SACRE meeting. It seemed most likely to belong to Gill Ledsham, so this would be checked and returned as necessary.

(ACTION: Tina Stevenson)

The Reverend Michael Bentley offered his apologies for the next SACRE meeting.

15. **Dates of future meetings**

Wednesday 7 March 2007
Thursday 12 July 2007 (changed date)
Tuesday 13 November 2007
Tuesday 4 March 2008
Tuesday 10 July 2008

CHAIRMAN

Celtic Benediction

*Deep peace of the
Running wave to us.*

*Deep peace of the
Flowing air to us.*

*Deep peace of the
Quiet earth to us.*

*Deep peace of the
Shining stars to us.*

*Deep peace of the
Son of peace to us.*