

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON  
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
09 JULY 2008  
5.00 - 6.45 PM**



**Present:**

**The Free Churches:**

Rev Michael Bentley  
Irene Robinson  
Paula Ridgway

**Roman Catholic Churches:**

Louise Birley  
Anne Gibbons

**Other Religions:**

Kusum Trikha (Hindu Faith)  
Marcia Perkin

**The Church of England:**

Gordon Anderson (Chairman)  
David Fawcett  
Maureen Beadsley

**Associations Representing Teachers:**

Kathleen Nugent

**Bracknell Forest Council:**

Councillor Blatchford  
Councillor Mrs Hayes  
Councillor Thompson

**Co-opted Members:**

Kathy Hadfield (B'hai)

**Observer:**

Arfan Rashid

**In Attendance:**

Jo Fageant, SACRE's Associate Adviser  
Martin Surrell, Senior Adviser, Social Care & Learning  
Priya Patel, Democratic Services Officer

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillors Brunel-Walker and Leake.  
Julie Mintern, Felicity Allen, Colin Hickson, and Sam Hunt.

**56. Welcome [Prayer to be led by Irene Robinson]**

The Chairman welcomed all those present at the meeting and in particular welcomed the newly appointed Jewish representative, Marcia Perkin to her first meeting of the Bracknell Forest SACRE.

The Chairman also offered his congratulations to Jo Fageant for becoming a member of the Executive Committee at NASACRE.

**57. Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 March 2008**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 4 March 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**58. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

**59. SACRE Membership Update**

The Chairman reiterated his welcome to Marcia Perkin to the meeting as the Jewish representative and informed members that a nomination for Arfan Rashid had still not been received. Members agreed that the Chairman should write to Democratic Services on the behalf of SACRE to nominate Arfan.

The Chairman welcomed David Fawcett who was now formally a member of the SACRE as well as noting that two elected members were also new to the membership of the SACRE but had both given apologies for this meeting.

**60. Artefacts Update and Review**

Martin Surrell reported that St Michael's Easthampstead Park CE Aided Primary School had made considerable use of the artefacts. He reported that the catalogue for the artefacts needed to be updated and added to the Council's website. A PDF version of the catalogue would then be e-mailed to all schools. It was noted that in order to minimise printing costs, colour printed copies of the catalogue would only be sent if requested.

Members expressed concern that it had come to light that Ranelagh in conjunction with Bracknell Forest were also operating a loaning service for artefacts. Members felt that this duplicated the work of the SACRE and was not an effective use of resources. Members asked that the relevant officer be identified with a view to exploring how this had happened without consultation with SACRE and to obtain details of this new resource. It was agreed that the Chairman should consider writing directly to the school. It was noted that Ranelagh may have utilised Extended Services funding to run their loaning service.

**61. Brakenhale School - RE Inspection and Action Plan Update**

Martin Surrell reported that he had spoken to the head teacher at Brakenhale in the previous week and that the school seemed to have a good action plan in place for RE. The head of RE was due to be replaced soon, which would allow the head teacher to re-establish RE and strengthen the subject area in the school. It was hoped that improvements would be seen in the near future.

Jo Fageant reported that the locally agreed syllabus ensured that all children would be taught RE, however it would be on a carousel basis. Members expressed concern

that the complete RE syllabus could not be taught on a carousel basis and asked Martin Surrell to suggest within his department that Bracknell Forest in conjunction with the school reconsidered this.

#### Cranbourne Primary School

Martin Surrell reported that Ofsted had reported that the school's progress had been satisfactory. The school had felt that this was a fair assessment.

Jo Fageant reported that Alan Brine had spent some time looking at the diverse quality of syllabuses and considering whether or not they provided quality RE teaching. Jo Fageant felt that on the basis of one school using an unimaginative interpretation of the syllabus, it was unfair to infer that the syllabus was not effectively supporting or delivering effective teaching of RE.

If the syllabus was not easily interpreted, mechanisms needed to be in place to enable teachers to interpret the syllabus more easily. It was noted that teachers often did not read the introductory material of the syllabus but just went straight to the teaching material itself.

The SACRE agreed that Jo Fageant would produce a supplementary paper that could accompany the syllabus and perhaps be used as a basis for a training session. The paper would deal with the 'how' of teaching RE. Martin Surrell reported that whilst the syllabus had been well received by schools, it was felt that the 'how' still needed to be addressed.

The Chairman stated that there was some funding in the budget that could be used to support this work. Members were in agreement.

#### **62. NASACRE AGM 8 May 2008 - Report by Anne Gibbons**

In addition to the written report, Anne Gibbons reported that the Youth Inter-Faith projects were big projects and that she would keep SACRE members informed of these.

The Chairman thanked Anne for her comprehensive report.

#### **63. Bracknell Forest SACRE Prizes to Pupils for Achievement in RE - Working Party Update**

Paula Ridgway reported that the working group had come up with some ideas of how this work could be taken forward. The working group suggested the following:

- Information on the opportunity to undertake a project could be publicised in schools in the Easter break, aimed at upper key stages 5 and 6.
- Children could work on projects individually or in groups during June and July, perhaps in activity week or during RE classes in the classroom. It was important that the children considered 'harmony' when completing their projects and it was acceptable for the children to use a variety of formats such as film to present their work.
- Prize could be awarded in Autumn (year 6 would have left school, but this shouldn't be a problem). The kind of prize to be awarded still needed to be decided.

The Chairman thanked the working group for their ideas and asked that they bring a definitive paper to the November meeting, which gave detailed information on the operation of the project and the budget required for the project. Members were also asked to forward any other ideas they may have to either Paula or Kusum.

64. **NASACRE/Westhill Awards 2009/10 for Young Inter-Faith Projects - Report from working Party**

The working party reported that they had been unable to meet but had outlined the aims of the project and would be meeting later in the month. It was agreed that the working party should put together a more definitive paper that included costings and bring it back to the next meeting of the SACRE.

65. **Berkshire SACREs' Conference - 18 June 2008**

Jo Fageant reported that the 'how' of RE was raised several times at the Conference and was seen as a national issue, therefore any work done on this was an advantage. It was noted that schools' feedback on the syllabus would be a key indicator as to the syllabuses effectiveness.

There had been a focus on Community Cohesion, with the impetus coming from the Government. It was clear that to get any funding or support for RE, it would need to be linked to a positive impact on the community.

The idea of youth SACREs was also discussed.

Members agreed that they would most certainly like a conference in the following year and that a keynote speaker should be invited. Jo Fageant suggested that based on the evaluation, next year's conference could focus on the 'how' of RE, creativity and thinking skills. This was welcomed by members.

66. **New Secondary Curriculum**

Jo Fageant reported that she had attended a Subject Regional Training Day in Reading on this. It was clear that heads of school departments needed to have a sound understanding of the new curriculum, as there were infinite ways that it could be interpreted. She stated that there was a great deal of information and support available for department heads.

It was important to note that the new curriculum was compatible with the Bracknell Forest agreed syllabus. The new curriculum encouraged cross curricular initiatives, it was noted that some schools were collapsing their timetables and having themed days. The importance of disciplined innovation was highlighted, it was crucial that the essence of each subject was not lost when joining with other subjects.

The new curriculum would be rolled out in September 2008 with the first inspections in 2011. It was reported that the response by Bracknell Forest schools had been conservative. Schools would have the roll out period in which to consider their arrangements.

**67. RE Newsletter and Proposal**

Members were given a copy of the newsletter that was distributed to Diocesan schools entitled 'Religious Education Update'. The Chairman proposed that this newsletter could be adapted and sent to Bracknell Forest schools and in particular RE teachers.

The newsletter could be a vehicle for communicating the NASACRE /Westhill Awards 2009/10 project, and used to recruit teachers to SACRE as well as to more generally directly communicate with RE teachers. Members agreed that this would work well.

**68. West Berkshire's SACRE Monitoring of Schools**

Jo Fageant reported that the feedback from schools had been hugely positive and that self evaluation had raised questions for each of the schools. Six neighbouring schools in the Borough who had never joined together were excited by the concept.

Members agreed that this could be reviewed later in the academic year, or when funding would become available in the new municipal year.

**69. Self Evaluation of Bracknell Forest SACRE - parts 3 & 4**

On the proposition of the Chairman, members agreed to defer this item until the next meeting.

Jo Fageant reported that QCA had issued a new format for SACRE annual reports based on the format of the self evaluation. Members agreed that the existing format be used until guidance was revised. It was noted that the annual report would be drafted in the autumn.

**70. Dates of Future Meetings**

Thursday 6 November 2008, Council Chamber at Easthampstead House.  
Tuesday 10 March 2009, Council Chamber at Easthampstead House.  
Wednesday 8 July 2009, Donnington Room, Education Centre

**CHAIRMAN**