

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
10 MARCH 2010
5.00 - 6.25 PM**



Present:

Mr Gordon Anderson (Chairman)	Church of England
Mrs Paula Ridgway	Free Church
Irene Robinson	Free Church
Mrs Carol Nicholls	Roman Catholic Church
Mr Joel Roszykiewicz	Buddhist Faith
Rabbi Zvi Solomons	Jewish Faith
Mr Arfan Rashid	Muslim Faith
Mrs Ranjit Bilkhu	Sikh Faith
Mr David Fawcett	Church of England
Mrs Kathleen Nugent	NAHT
Ms Felicity Allen	NASUWT
Mr Colin Hickson	NUT
Cllr Andy Blatchford	Bracknell Forest Council
Cllr Mrs Dorothy Hayes	Bracknell Forest Council
Cllr Cliff Thompson	Bracknell Forest Council

Co-optees (non-voting)

Dr Kathy Hadfield	Baha'i Faith
Rev Michael Bentley	

In attendance

Jo Fageant	SACRE Associate Adviser
Martin Surrell	Senior Adviser, Children, Young People and Learning
Liz Sanneh	Democratic Services

129. Welcome and Introductions (opening words/prayer to be led by Arfan Rashid)

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming members, and in particular Mrs Ranjit Bilkhu, who was attending as the Sikh representative. Introductions around the table followed.

Arfan Rashid opened the meeting, speaking of charity, alms, and acts of kindness. The Chairman thanked Mr Rashid for his contribution.

130. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Maureen Beadsley, Anne Gibbons, Samantha Hunt, Julie Mintern and Kusum Trikha.

131. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November had been circulated and were agreed as a true record.

132. Matters Arising not already on the agenda

Training

Jo Fageant confirmed that training of new members had been undertaken. Mr Rashid confirmed that this had been useful.

Resources Centre and Artefacts

Ranelagh School had been sent the report on the Bracknell Forest SACRE loans service, but no response had been received from Ranelagh concerning their collection.

Examination Results

The Chairman had forwarded the request for examination results to be broken down by school to the Chief Adviser – Learning and Achievement.

Annual Report

The SACRE Annual Report 2008/2009 had been sent to QCDA, and was now on the Bracknell Forest website.

133. SACRE Membership Update

The Chairman told the meeting that Madeline Diver had been in touch with Voice, who had written in October nominating her as their representative on SACRE. However, the letter had not been received, so it was being re-sent to Bracknell Forest Council.

With regard to the Free Churches vacancy, it had been suggested that the Seventh Day Adventist church should be represented on SACRE, and the Bracknell Forest Council officers would make contact with them.

Action: Liz Sanneh

134. The new primary curriculum and RE

Jo Fageant spoke about the new Primary Curriculum, which was now available. There were links to this given in the agenda papers. There had been a revision of the national curriculum, but the Bracknell Forest agreed syllabus remained in place. Ms Fageant told the meeting that there was an opportunity for confusion for schools as this was part of the statutory curriculum but not part of the national curriculum. It should be considered when changing the RE syllabus. The locally-agreed curriculum was more flexible for schools, but could not stipulate how much time should be allocated to the teaching of RE in primary schools. It was possible to use wording such as “to use this syllabus effectively you may need to give 5% of teaching time to it”.

Concern was expressed by members that this was confusing. It was suggested and agreed that SACRE should issue a response to this to counter the confusion. It was suggested that this could also go to the Primary Heads meeting for update. Ms Fageant also told the group that she had access to draft cross-curricular work from West Berkshire, and this resource could be made available to Bracknell Forest schools. It was agreed that she would inform the Chairman when this became available, and he would distribute it electronically.

Action: Jo Fageant/Gordon Anderson

135. New non-statutory advice for RE

Jo Fageant told the meeting that there was new non-statutory guidance for RE, replacing Circular 194. She urged members to take a close look at the document, which contained two chapters about the importance of RE, and chapter 3 was about the role and responsibilities of SACRE. It divided the role of SACRE into must-do and should-do, and was a useful document. The Chairman welcomed the clarity which this document brought. He thanked Jo Fageant for bringing it to the attention of the members.

Jo also indicated that the Chairman of the National Association of SACREs had reviewed this document, and the review would be published in the newsletter on the national website. Hard copies were available from DCSF publications.

136. RE Resources

Martin Surrell reported that over the past three months since November 2009, five primary schools and one special school had borrowed resources from SACRE, and the loans had gone smoothly. A suggestion was made that some of the SACRE budget might be spent on buying reference books for the loan service. Jo Fageant acknowledged that books were a valuable resource for RE teachers, but urged members to encourage teachers to go look on websites (eg RE online) where there was a wealth of resources.

Rabbi Solomons told the meeting that his synagogue provided resources for school children, which included a tour of the synagogue, samples of Jewish foods and information about Jewish lifestyles. It was necessary to book about six months in advance, but schools using this tour were very impressed by it. The Chairman reminded members that SACRE had created a directory with this type of information but it was in need of updating.

Jo Fageant then drew attention to the new report on resources (link in agenda) which gave information about available and frequently used RE resources.

137. SACRE Budget

The Chairman tabled an email from the Chief Adviser – Learning and Achievement concerning the SACRE budget. Mr Anderson expressed concern that in spite of a costed Development Plan being drawn up by SACRE, there had been no consultation with members of SACRE on the level of budget which Bracknell Forest Council planned to allow the group. However, he understood that if more than the initial £1500 was needed, it would be forthcoming.

The Chairman told the meeting that he would take up the matter of consultation on the budget with the Executive Member.

On the subject of SACRE's obligation to review the RE syllabus, Jo Fageant suggested that as the locally agreed syllabus had previously been agreed with the five SACREs in Berkshire, there would need to be a strategy to share the review. The syllabus review must begin within five years of the publication of the previous syllabus. The Chairman asked the meeting whether the members wanted to proceed with a joint review in this way again, and it was unanimously agreed. It was suggested that the initial meeting could take place at the SACRE conference in June.

138. **The Berkshire Joint SACREs' Conference - Tuesday 15 June 2010**

The Chairman told the meeting that the annual SACRE conference would take place on 16 June, 6.00 pm for 6.30 pm. Jo Fageant would email invitations via the Chairman. Bracknell Forest SACRE had an open-door approach to conference attendance, and the Chairman asked that anyone who was interested in attending should register their interest with him as numbers might have to be restricted. However, if more than five people wanted to go, it was possible for people to pay their own way to attend.

139. **The Monitoring of RE and CW in Bracknell Forest Schools - update on the way forward**

Martin Surrell reported that he and Jo Fageant had discussed the monitoring, which could be achieved in two ways: the first was to use the facility of a sample of schools each year to review the quality of RE provision, which would need a half-day commitment by the schools involved. This would provide quality feedback, and over a four-year period all schools could be reviewed. There were a number of secondary school subject networks, but these had proved difficult to get off the ground. In principle it was a good model, but difficult to release teachers during the day as appropriate cover was difficult and expensive to find. The alternative would be to use a self-evaluation for which an on-line tool was available. This could potentially provide a much bigger sample, and could be presented to schools via the Headteachers' meeting. The questionnaire used for this self-evaluation was professionally produced, and provided a statistical analysis.

The Chairman suggested that both systems should be tried. Jo Fageant agreed, but suggested that getting a group together offered teachers more than just questionnaire filling would. The preferred options could be outlined at a future meeting of Bracknell Forest headteachers.

The members **AGREED** that the adviser and officer should progress this.

Action: Jo Fageant/Martin Surrell

140. **Any other business**

Paula Ridgway had attended the Faith and Belief Conference on 9 March 2010, co-ordinated by the Bracknell Forest Volunteer Association, exploring equality together with members of other faiths. It had been an exciting day with good representation and excellent networking opportunities. A steering group was being formed for a Faith and Belief Forum to promote community cohesion.

Rabbi Solomons commented that Basingstoke and Reading had also held a similar conference, and suggested it would be good to join with other unitary authorities for an event like this.

141. **Dates of Future Meetings**

The next meeting of the Bracknell Forest SACRE will take place on Thursday 8 July 2010.

CHAIRMAN