

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
8 MARCH 2012
5.00 - 6.00 PM**



Present:

Paula Ridgway, The Free Churches (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair)
John Baidam, The Free Churches
Anne Gibbons, Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth
Carol Nicholls, Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth
Joel Roszykiewicz, Buddhist faith
Arfan Rashid, Muslim faith
David Fawcett, Church of England
Julie Mintern, Church of England
Mark Olney, Church of England
Councillor Dr Gareth Barnard, Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Peter Heydon, Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Clifton Thompson, Bracknell Forest Council
Madeline Diver, Associations Representing Teachers (VOICE)
Kathy Hadfield, Co-opted Member
Rev Michael Bentley, Co-opted Member

In Attendance:

Ms Jo Fageant, Oxford Diocese
Martin Surrell, Bracknell Forest Council

Apologies for absence were received from:

Susan Burrow, The Free Churches
Rabbi Zvi Solomons, Jewish faith
Councillor Andy Blatchford, Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Mrs Dorothy Hayes MBE, Bracknell Forest Council
Felicity Allen, Associations Representing Teachers (NASUWT)
Colin Hickson, Associations Representing Teachers (NUT)
Maria Soulsby, Associations Representing teachers (NAHT)

15. Welcome (prayer by Madeline Diver)

The Vice Chairman, Paula Ridgway welcomed all to the meeting and invited Madeline Diver to open the meeting with a prayer.

Madeline Diver read a piece of prose titled 'To Be'.

The Vice-Chairman reported that Gordon Anderson had decided to bring forward his retirement and as a result Paula Ridgway would chair this meeting and the next meeting. The Vice-Chairman asked that Gordon Anderson be thanked for all the work he had undertaken as chairman of SACRE since its inception, he had been an excellent chair and his meticulous eye for detail had defined SACRE and developed SACRE into what was today.

Dr Kathy Hadfield referred members of the Group to a resource that she had found to be particularly useful titled 'Green Spirituality' by Chris Philpott (Author House). It was noted that this material would be a good resource for teaching RE and covered all the major religions.

16. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2011 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

17. SACRE Membership

The Vice-Chairman welcomed Mr Mark Olney to the meeting, as the newly appointed Church of England representative.

The Clerk reported that all vacancies had now been filled except that of the ASCL representative. Martin Surrell agreed to speak to school colleagues again to see if there was any interest in the vacancy.

(Action: Martin Surrell)

Members were asked to consider whether they would like to chair future meetings of SACRE as Paula Ridgway would be standing down from SACRE on 5 July.

It was noted that Colin Hickson would also be resigning from SACRE at the next meeting.

18. NASACRE News and AGM - 23 May 2012 (London)

Dr Kathy Hadfield indicated that she would like to attend the NASACRE AGM, if for any reason she was unable to attend, David Fawcett would attend in her place.

Jo Fageant reported that NASACRE was experiencing a difficult period, nationally, increasing numbers of schools had become academies and were then no longer under the auspices of the local authority and SACRE. In some places this had led to a situation whereby a locally agreed syllabus was required by law, however none of the local schools followed it.

NASACRE was currently in the process of creating a leaflet aimed at academies to outline their RE teaching obligations and to suggest to academies that they use the syllabus already in place developed by their local authority.

If schools became academies, they had the opportunity to buy back services from their local authority, however if academies chose not to, they would then also not receive the services of SACRE. This raised the question of sustainability of some SACRE's in the Country. It was noted that Ranelagh Secondary School was now an academy.

It was reported that it would be the decision of governing bodies as to whether they wished to become academies. In Bracknell Forest close relationships existed between schools and the local authority and it was hoped that this would not be lost. There was no directional steer from the Council that schools should become academies.

19. Syllabus Launch and Joint SACRE's Conference

Jo Fageant reported that other SACRE's had said that they would like to have a joint syllabus launch and training day for RE teachers instead of a Joint SACRE Conference this year. This would allow teachers to get accustomed to the new syllabus and would hopefully lead to the syllabus being more effectively implemented in schools. SACRE members could then attend the launch and training day.

SACRE members agreed that this would work well. It was agreed that the Training Day would take place prior to the SACRE meeting on 5 July at the Easthampstead Conference Centre, between 1-4.30pm. The SACRE meeting would then begin at 4.30pm and would begin with the syllabus launch.

The format for the training afternoon would be an introduction by Jo Fageant followed by the teachers working in small groups to ensure engagement.

Martin Surrell confirmed that the SACRE budget would be able to accommodate this.

It was noted that there would also be syllabus launches held on 28 and 29 June, in different locations in Berkshire and both events would be open to all SACRE members across the region.

20. **Resources Centre and Artefacts Update**

Martin Surrell reported that since the last meeting two schools had borrowed two collections. There had been a noticeable decline in the use of the artefacts. Schools seemed to be building up their own collections which was a positive development. The Vice-Chairman also suggested that it was very positive to have the collection in the Education Centre, as that meant that all visiting the Centre had a chance to view the display and perhaps even become curious.

It was suggested that the artefacts could be showcased as part of the Launch Event, in addition schools could be approached to write a paragraph about how they found using the artefacts useful and these paragraphs could be displayed at the launch.

The Vice-Chairman stated that there would be a Welcome to Bracknell Forest event in September at the Conference Centre aimed at NQT teachers and in the past, SACRE members attended during the break to welcome the teachers on behalf of SACRE and point out the artefacts collection, she suggested that this practice continue. The date in September was yet to be confirmed by Martin Surrell. Martin confirmed that he had copies of the catalogue of the collection left, which he could make available.

(Action: Martin Surrell)

21. **Teaching of R.E - Newspaper Article (Information Item)**

The Vice-Chairman stated that she was heartened to see MP's involvement in safeguarding RE.

22. **Any Other Business**

Mark Olney reported that he had attended a Faith Debate on 22 February arranged by Rebecca Catch and delivered by Richard Dorkin which had been very interesting. The debate included discussion on the place of RE in schools and an academic study which looked at RE teaching. There was also discussion around the fact that less than a £1 per pupil was spent on RE and that schools often tagged RE to the end of their delivery of the curriculum. It had also been noted that specialist places for teacher training for RE had also dropped.

One of the views that arose from the event was that some of the best RE learning came from questioning. It was also felt that there should be a place for assessment around pupils debating, questioning and interacting with one another.

There was a pod cast of the event, which would be sent to the clerk to be circulated to the group.

(Action: Mark Olney)

The Committee noted that it was very positive that the Bracknell Forest RE Agreed Syllabus, on which the Conference, would be working was very much based on the use of questions.

23. Dates of Future Meetings

5 July 2012, Education Centre, Easthampstead Conference Centre
8 November 2012, Council Chamber