

NOTICE OF MEETING

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Thursday 7 March 2013, 5.00 pm

Council Chamber, Fourth Floor, Easthampstead House, Bracknell

To: The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

David Fawcett, Church of England (Chairman)
John Baildam, The Free Churches
Ken Blanton, The Free Churches
Mr Christopher Smith, The Free Churches
Carol Nicholls, Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth
One Vacancy, Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth
One Vacancy, Hindu Faith
Joel Roszykiewicz, Buddhist faith
Rabbi Zvi Solomons, Jewish faith
Arfan Rashid, Muslim faith
Ranjit Bilkhu, Sikh Community
Mark Olney, Church of England
One Vacancy, Church of England
One Vacancy, Church of England
Councillor Andy Blatchford, Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Dr Gareth Barnard, Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Will Davison, Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Mrs Dorothy Hayes MBE, Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Clifton Thompson, Bracknell Forest Council
Felicity Allen, Associations Representing Teachers (NASUWT)
Madeline Diver, Associations Representing Teachers (VOICE)
Maria Soulsby, Associations Representing Teachers (NAHT)
One Vacancy, Associations Representing Teachers (ASCL)
Kathy Hadfield, Co-opted Member
One Vacancy, Co-opted Member

ALISON SANDERS
Director of Corporate Services

EMERGENCY EVACUATION INSTRUCTIONS

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If you require further information, please contact: Ron Schrieber
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**Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
Thursday 7 March 2013, 5.00 pm
Council Chamber, Fourth Floor, Easthampstead House,
Bracknell**

AGENDA

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|--|---------|
| 1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence | |
| 2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 November 2012. | 1 - 4 |
| 3. Matters Arising | |
| 4. Membership Update and Census Information
Abby Thomas, Head of Community Engagement and Equalities, Bracknell Forest Council, to attend. | |
| 5. Correspondence with the Department for Education
Correspondence attached for information. | 5 - 6 |
| 6. Ideas on an RE Event for Pupils | |
| 7. Locally Agreed Syllabus and Related Training | |
| 8. Work Programme
To consider the future work programme. | |
| 9. Any Other Business | |
| 10. Dates of Future Meetings
4 July 2013, Education Centre
7 November 2013, Council Chamber | |

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
8 NOVEMBER 2012
5.00 - 6.20 PM**



Present:

John Baildam, The Free Churches
Mr Christopher Smith, The Free Churches
Carol Nicholls, Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth
Joel Roszykiewicz, Buddhist faith
Arfan Rashid, Muslim faith
David Fawcett, Church of England (Chairman)
Councillor Andy Blatchford, Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Will Davison, Bracknell Forest Council
Madeline Diver, Associations Representing Teachers (VOICE)
Kathy Hadfield, 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
Mark Olney, Church of England
Councillor Mrs Dorothy Hayes MBE, Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Clifton Thompson, Bracknell Forest Council
Maria Soulsby, Associations Representing Teachers (NAHT)

23. Election of Chairman

RESOLVED that David Fawcett be elected Chairman of SACRE for the academic year 2012/13.

24. Appointment of Deputy Chairman

RESOLVED that Madeline Diver and Kathy Hadfield be appointed Deputy Chairmen of SACRE for the academic year 2012/13.

25. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

26. Matters Arising

Further to Minute 17, Feedback on New Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE and Training Opportunities, Martin Surrell reported that he had emailed a pdf version of the Syllabus, rather than a cd version, to the Headteacher of each school. He also confirmed that three hard copies of the syllabus had been provided for the RE Coordinator, Headteacher and Chair of Governors of each school.

27. SACRE Membership

A report listing current vacancies was noted. Subsequent to the publication of the report, the resignation of Susan Burrow (Free Churches) had been received.

The Clerk reported that the relevant organisations had been requested to nominate representatives to fill the vacancies, some more than once, and none had yet done so. He requested Members who were representatives of those organisations to contact the nominating bodies to encourage them to make nominations or to suggest possible representatives.

(Action: Cof E, Catholic and Free Churches Members)

It was also agreed that the possibility of advertising the vacancies on the Council website be investigated.

(Action: Clerk)

28. Locally Agreed Syllabus and Related Training

Jo Fageant reported on training events as follows:

- A recent Twilight meeting attended by Primary School teachers. Those attending had been very enthusiastic about taking work on the syllabus forward.
- Another event was to be held on 30 January 2013 for those new to the role of RE Coordinator.
- A course entitled "Using Digital Technology to Give RE the HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills)". Details would be circulated.

(Action: Jo Fageant)

It was agreed that Twilight meeting dates be circulated to SACRE members.

(Action: Jo Fageant)

It was agreed that Governor Services be requested to consider providing training on the new Locally Agreed Syllabus.

(Action: Martin Surrell)

29. National Subject Review of Religious Education

Jo Fageant reported on the meeting of the RE Council of England and Wales held on 7 November.

She reported that there was considerable concern about the future of religious education given that RE had not been included in the Government's current review of the curriculum and that bursaries were no longer available for PGCE RE students, only being provided for English Baccalaureate subjects and "subjects of national interest".

The RE Council had looked at the first phase of the review of RE. The outcome was likely to be a new National Framework.

SACRE members expressed the view that, as RE was a compulsory school subject, it should be included in the English Baccalaureate. It was agreed that a letter from SACRE to the Secretary of State for Education be drafted to this effect and circulated to members for comment.

(Action: David Fawcett/Cllr Blatchford)

30. **School Examination Results 2011 Review**

Martin Surrell provided SACRE members with provisional examination results for 2011 for the Borough.

He reported that results in the GCSE Full course were outstanding, with over 90% achieving a grade C or better, compared to 74% nationally. In one school 68 out of 69 entries achieved at least a grade C. However, the number of students taking this examination declined from 304 in 2011 to 205 this year. This represented c16% of the cohort.

Numbers taking the GCSE Short course increased from 221 to 321, with over 74% achieving at least a grade C. In total, around half of the cohort took an external examination in RE.

Numbers taking the A Level in RE remained similar to last year, with all 34 students achieving at least a grade E and 62% achieving grades A* - B.

It was agreed that the results, once validated, be circulated for information.

(Action Martin Surrell)

It was also agreed that discussions be held with school curriculum managers to establish how RE is taught and the potential impact of the English Baccalaureate on RE.

(Action Martin Surrell)

31. **SACRE Annual Report**

The draft SACRE Annual Report 2011-2012 had been circulated.

Jo Fageant reported that, following the abolition of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, there was no set template for the report so she had drafted it in a simpler, more accessible format. All SACRE annual reports would be available on the NASACRE website.

Members agreed the new format and suggested the following amendments:

- Page 1: NASACE website address to be added.
- Page 3: Number of additional meetings to address Additional Syllabus Conference business to be included.
- Page 3: Delete repeated “been” from Membership Update, second paragraph.
- Page 3: Add that David Fawcett attended the NASACRE AGM.
- Page 3: Add that Cllrs Blatchford and Heydon, Madeline Diver and Joel Roszykiewicz attended the establishment of the Bracknell Forest Faith and Belief Forum.
- Page 3 and 4: Delete “Madeline Driver” and insert “Madeline Diver”.
- Page 4: Add Kathy Hadfield, Co-opted Member to Membership

(Action Jo Fageant)

32. **Practitioner Workshop - Religion and Belief, Discrimination and Equality, 7 November 2012**

Madeline Diver tabled a report on the workshop which set out the main purposes and the issues discussed. The results were due to be published in January and she stated that it might be appropriate to report back when the evidence was in the public domain.

(Action: Madeline Diver)

33. Any Other Business

a) Work Programme

Having completed its work on the syllabus and in the light of the recent changes in membership, the meeting considered its future work programme. The following issues were suggested for inclusion:

- How schools are finding the new syllabus
- The impact of the English Baccalaureate on RE
- The extent to which schools are following the requirements regarding collective worship.
- A joint SACRE conference
- RE teachers attending to talk about their work.

It was agreed that the current SACRE Development Plan be circulated for review.

(Action: Martin Surrell)

b) Interfaith Events

Madeline Diver reminded members about the Faith and Belief Forum “Compassion in Action” event on 27 November, details of which had been circulated.

34. Dates of Future Meetings

7 March 2013, Council Chamber

4 July 2013, Education Centre

7 November 2013, Council Chamber

Agenda Item 5

Furzehill
Terrace Road South
Binfield
Berkshire
RG42 4DS
Date to be included

Dear Michael,

I have been asked to write to you on behalf of the Bracknell Forest SACRE which is very concerned about recent developments that have been initiated and effectively lower the status of Religious Education in schools. Firstly RE is not a subject which qualifies as a subject in the EBAC and secondly there are no bursaries for those who wish to train as RE specialists.

History teaches us that a lack of understanding of others often creates fear directly and even where this is not the case unscrupulous people can promulgate untruths or extremely embroidered truths to inculcate fear in the general population. This in the past has led directly to the holocaust and genocide in many areas of the world - even in this country in former times. RE addresses directly this aspect of what is to be a rounded education in this country today. In learning about religions many misconceptions are met head on and issues addressed. In learning from religions it is aimed to make pupils more aware of themselves and to become more rounded individuals with a real understanding of their own beliefs and structures.

For some years the reports in OFSTED inspections on RE teaching have been cursory. It is perhaps not just a coincidence that the church schools that you value highly have a more intense SIAS inspection that concentrates on the teaching of RE and collective worship within the school. This would seem to indicate to me that when the status of RE is raised, then much that is good follows.

I would value a reply which indicates how our SACRE can counteract this loss of status among pupils and, realising how short of money your department is, I enclose a stamped addressed envelope for your reply.

Yours sincerely

David J. Fawcett
(Chair of Bracknell Forest SACRE)

Reply to my letter dated the 18th January 2013

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 10 December, addressed to the Secretary of State, about Religious Education (RE) and the English Baccalaureate.

I can assure you that the Government is committed to maintaining the status of RE as a compulsory subject that all pupils must study throughout their schooling, unless their parents have withdrawn them. We acknowledge that RE is important and studying it teaches children to understand the history that has shaped the values and traditions of this country, as well as other countries and cultures. It forms a key part of promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children and young people.

You ask about the impact of English Baccalaureate Certificates (EBCs) on subjects, such as RE, in which the Government is not proposing to develop EBCs. Those other subjects remain valuable and pupils will continue to study them alongside an academic core. We are currently considering how to make sure that high quality qualifications are available beyond the English Baccalaureate subjects, building on the more rigorous approach we are proposing for EBCs, and following our recent consultation, we will make an announcement in due course.

The Department has seen the research carried out by the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) on respondents' perceptions around the introduction of the Ebacc. Whilst acknowledging their depth of feeling, it is, however, the case that entries to Religious Studies GCSEs increased in 2012 by 7.7 percent. The headcount for teachers of RE at Key Stage 4 had increased from 10,400 in 2010 to 10,700 in 2011, and the number of hours of RE taught at Key Stage 4 had increased over the same period from 47,300 to 47,600. This shows that RE remains a popular and successful subject. Indeed, as a proportion of overall subjects entered, religious studies entries have surpassed both history and geography entries for the first time.

Thank you for writing on this important matter and I hope that my letter is helpful.

With best wishes

Elizabeth Truss MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Education and Childcare