

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
HELD AT EASTHAMPSTEAD HOUSE, BRACKNELL ON
WEDNESDAY 7 MARCH 2007
(5.00PM-6.25PM)**

Present:

- Free Churches:
 - Mrs Paula Ridgway
- Roman Catholic Churches:
 - Mrs Louise Birley
 - Mrs Anne Gibbons
- Other Religions:
 - Dr Kathy Hadfield
 - Mrs Kusum Trikha
- Church of England:
 - Mr Gordon Anderson (Chairman)
 - Councillor Mrs Maureen Beadsley
 - Mrs Julie Graham
 - Mrs Julie Mintern
- Associations Representing Teachers:
 - Mr Colin Hickson
 - Mrs Samantha Hunt
 - Mrs Felicity Allen
- Bracknell Forest LEA:
 - Mr David Fawcett
 - Councillor Cliff Thompson

Apologies for absence were received from:

Reverend M Bentley, Councillor Mrs D Hayes, Mrs K Nugent, Mrs I
Robinson and Councillor Mrs J Ryder.

In attendance: Mr Roger Theobald, Education, Children's Services & Libraries, BFBC

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chairman, Gordon Anderson, welcomed all those present to the meeting. David Fawcett read Psalm 133 followed by a prayer.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2006

The minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 14 November 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment:

The title for David Fawcett needed to be amended to 'Mr'.

3. Matters arising

Minute 8 – Artefacts update and review – Proposal to purchase books

It was not known whether or not the books and DVDs on Christmas and Christianity and the book and CD entitled 'Science and Religion in Schools' had been purchased

yet, or whether schools were aware of this resource. This would be looked into and reported back to the next meeting.

(ACTION: Roger Theobald)

Minute 13 – Bracknell Forest SACRE's Annual Report 2005/06

The meeting was advised that copies of this report would be available at the end of the meeting.

Minute 14 – Any other business

Gordon Anderson had approached the Oxford Church of England Diocese for a nomination to fill the vacancy that would occur following Julie Graham's retirement at the end of the Summer Term.

4. SACRE membership

Gordon Anderson welcomed Felicity Allen, the representative nominated by the NAS/UWT, who had attended the previous meeting as an observer, and had now been officially appointed as the NAS/UWT representative to SACRE.

Gordon Anderson introduced Roger Theobald, a Senior Advisor with the Education, Children's Services & Libraries Department who had taken on the role previously undertaken by Nasir Sabir. It was explained that Martin Surrell had been appointed to attend SACRE meetings, but had been unable to attend this meeting due to a conflicting appointment. Roger gave an overview of his roles and responsibilities and said that he hoped to attend a future meeting in order to give a presentation on the work he performed.

5. Budget for 2007/08

The meeting was advised that the figures for 2007/08 were not yet known, and that an update would be given at the next meeting. Gordon Anderson was optimistic that the figures would be the same as for 2006/07.

6. Examination Statistics for 2005/06

The meeting was advised that Gordon Anderson would be discussing this item with Martin Surrell, and that it would be covered in more detail at the next meeting. The fact that some pupils had taken the short course rather than the full RE course might have an impact on the figures.

7. New Agreed Syllabus – Humanism Appendix

The meeting was advised that there were issues relating to the proposed amendments to the Humanism Appendix to the new Agreed Syllabus. A copy of the appendix showing the proposed changes was circulated, but this was difficult to follow. Gordon Anderson had a version that was easier to understand, and he would forward this for circulation to SACRE members.

(ACTION: Gordon Anderson)

After discussion, it was felt that the best course of action would be to defer this item until a more definitive version of the document was available, and then decide whether a sub-group need to be formed to look at it. This could be decided before the meeting in July if the document was available in a reasonable form before then.

8. **Artefacts Update and Review**

The meeting was advised that the Sikh and Hindu artefacts were very heavily used, but that the Islam and Buddhist artefacts were not used very much. This was attributed to the fact that these two religions were not part of the primary curriculum, and most secondary schools had their own artefacts. Other than at Christmas and Easter, the Christian artefacts were not used very much either.

It was felt that more Sikh and Hindu artefacts were required, and the meeting was advised that there was probably funding available, but that it needed to be spent in this financial year. If the funding was available, it should be used. The purchase of Sikh and Hindu artefacts would be progressed as a matter of some urgency.

(ACTION: Samantha Hunt)

Roger Theobald and Samantha Hunt would ask the RE Primary Coordinators at their meeting on 13 March what artefacts they would like to see available. Samantha would let Gordon know the outcome, and Roger would find out what budget was available for the rest of this year, and what the budget for 2007/08 would be.

(ACTION: Roger Theobald/Samantha Hunt)

The SACRE noted that, since the departure of the Resource Centre Support Officer, the loaning out of artefacts was being handled by Education Centre staff. There was guidance on what should be recorded when artefacts were loaned out, but there was a need to ensure that Education Centre staff knew what should be recorded so that usage was known. Sam Hunt agreed to carry out a full inventory. Sam had been involved with the original cataloguing of the artefacts and she would ascertain where the document was currently held. The level of usage of the artefacts would also be monitored and brought back to the next meeting. Gordon would also raise the issue of who was responsible for the artefacts with Martin Surrell.

(ACTION: Samantha Hunt/Gordon Anderson)

Concern was expressed that pertinent information was not available from officers, which was disappointing. This feeling was endorsed by the meeting.

In relation to the promotion of artefacts, Sam Hunt informed the meeting that they were publicised, especially at RE Co-ordinator meetings. Although no secondary RE Co-ordinators went to these meetings, they were well attended by primary RE Co-ordinators. Gordon Anderson would see whether Jo Fageant could put an article about the artefacts in SACRE News, and Roger Theobald would look into the possibility of including a similar article in the next edition of Curriculum Update. It was also suggested that the artefact catalogue, with photographs included, should already be on the BFBC website.

(ACTION: Gordon Anderson/Roger Theobald)

Sam Hunt felt that there had been concerns among primary teachers who were worried that they might handle artefacts incorrectly and give offence. The use of artefacts was now being promoted to all teachers who taught RE, not just to RE Co-ordinators, so that they would all feel more comfortable when handling artefacts.

Gordon Anderson would arrange a meeting with Martin Surrell and, if necessary with Allison Fletcher, to discuss the points raised at this meeting.

(ACTION: Gordon Anderson)

9. National Conference “Strong SACRE’s, Good RE”

The meeting was advised that a copy of the pack that had been handed out at the Conference was available. Gordon Anderson had prepared a report on the Conference. It was noted that his views about the event differed somewhat from a version of the feedback from the Conference that appeared in Issue 18 of SACRE News. Gordon Anderson thanked Louise Birley for the help she had given with the Self Evaluation Form (SEF). Gordon informed the meeting that the pilot new format for SACRE annual reports would be looked at again in light of feedback received at the Conference.

10. Berkshire SACREs’ Conference – Thursday 28 June 2007

Mark Chater, RE Officer at QCA, would be the keynote speaker at the Conference, which would be held at Easthampstead Park. All SACRE members should receive a personal invitation from Jo Fageant. Anyone wishing to attend the Conference should let Jo know, and also inform Gordon so that he was aware of numbers. Gordon requested that members who indicated that they would attend did so in order not to waste funds.

Gordon had been to a meeting at Wokingham before Christmas about training for new SACRE members. Wokingham were going ahead with this, but Gordon felt that this was something that might not be of great interest to members of this SACRE, as it was intended to be an induction course. Gordon would follow this up. Reading SACRE were possibly also interested in this training.

(ACTION: Gordon Anderson)

11. Raising the Profile of SACRE

It was suggested that the SACRE could have a presence at the ‘Welcome to Bracknell Forest’ event for new staff in September 2007, with some items on display such as the Agreed Syllabus and the Artefacts Catalogue. Roger Theobald would confirm the date with Gordon, who would then e-mail SACRE members asking for volunteers to attend this event.

(ACTION: Roger Theobald/Gordon Anderson)

The idea of RE Link Governors was raised, but it was pointed out that this had been tried in the past and only a few responses had been received.

David Fawcett suggested that a possible link up between the lack of secondary RE Co-ordinators at meetings and under use of Islam and Buddhist artefacts could be the availability of the internet. It was also noted that some secondary and primary schools had their own artefacts which could also be a contributory factor.

12. The Perception of RE in Schools

It was suggested that schools could be asked what they did in respect of teaching RE, as this was not covered adequately in Ofsted reports. However, it was felt that

schools might not respond well to yet another form to be completed. One approach could be that the SACRE would ask BFBC advisers what schools were doing in order to help SACRE plan for the future.

Another idea put forward would be for a member of SACRE to visit schools, although some schools would be reluctant for this to happen, as it could be seen as some sort of inspection. There would be a need to ensure that the correct protocols were followed, and that the whole situation was handled very sensitively.

13. **Other business**

Maureen Beadsley asked whether it would be possible to receive an interim report on how the new syllabus was being received in schools. The feedback so far had been positive, and more of a feeling would be gained at the RE Co-ordinators meeting on Tuesday meeting. This would go on the agenda for the next meeting.

(Action: Tina Stevenson)

The SACRE noted that more than 70 foreign languages were spoken in Bracknell Forest Schools. The latest figures available showed that, in the primary phase, 12% of children came from an ethnic background, and 15% of children at the Foundation stage came from an ethnic background. This would be looked into further after Gordon had met with Martin Surrell.

The annual SACRE AGM would be held in Birmingham on 5 May 2007 and it was felt that, if possible, a representative from this SACRE should attend. It was agreed that David Fawcett would attend as the Bracknell Forest SACRE representative.

14. **Dates of Future Meetings**

Thursday 12 July 2007
Tuesday 13 November 2007
Tuesday 4 March 2008
Tuesday 10 July 2008

CHAIRMAN