

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON  
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
5 JULY 2021  
5.00 - 6.30 PM**



**Present:**

Councillor Dr Gareth Barnard, Group D: Bracknell Forest Education Authority (Chairman)  
Madeline Diver, Group C: Teachers and teachers' representatives (Vice-Chairman)  
Ron Bailey, Group A: Free Church representative  
Vicki Gibson, Group A: Free Churches  
Abi Maclean, Group A: Free Church representative  
Robyn Lynch, Group A: Catholic Church  
Jo Perrett, Group A: Catholic representative  
Dilip Ladwa, Group A: Hindu representative  
Rajdip Marok-Dhanju, Group A: Sikh representative  
Rev Carol Dunk, Group B: Church of England representative  
Councillor Alvin Finch, Group D: Bracknell Forest Education Authority  
Councillor Mrs Lizzy Gibson, Group D: Bracknell Forest Education Authority  
Councillor Mrs Isabel Mattick, Group D: Bracknell Forest Education Authority  
Anne Andrews, Oxford Diocese Advisor

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Rev Malcolm Chalmers  
Father David Clues  
Jill Hanson  
Ruth Jackson  
Elaine White  
Deborah Windsor  
Alan Montgomery

**29. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 March 2021 were approved as a correct record.

**30. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**31. NASACRE funding report - questions to Local Authority and SACRE response**

Anne Andrews introduced a discussion around SACRE funding.

NASACRE had sent out a Freedom of Information in November 2020 to ask Local Authorities about their funding allocation for SACRE work. The results showed that funding for SACRE varied from no funding to £60,000, and the average was £11,000 per year. There was no connection between the size of Local Authority and their SACRE funding position.

NASACRE and the Department for Education both recommended that SACREs be funded from the Central School Services Block, however Bracknell Forest's return had stated that it was not possible to break the budget down to this level.

NASACRE and the Department for Education both recommended that SACREs should receive 2% of the Central School Services Block, and although SACRE members were not suggesting that this request be made to the Local Authority, it was noted that it would not be unreasonable to request additional funding for a SACRE project or purpose in future.

Arising from discussion, the following points were noted:

- SACRE members questioned the timing of the Freedom of Information request in the middle of the COVID pandemic and felt that it not been a good time for NASACRE to ask these questions of Local Authorities.
- It was noted that some SACRE funding was used to fund Democratic Services support for meetings, and thanked their clerk for her support.
- SACRE were content that the current budget arrangement was sufficient to support the currently SACRE workload, and that they could request additional funding should the need arise.
- NASACRE recommended that a good syllabus review should cost around £10,000, and SACRE recognised the advantageous position of sharing this work across Berkshire. However, if a full syllabus review was planned for the next review, this may require additional local authority funding.

### 32. Summary of Ofsted Review and report into RE

Anne Andrews gave an overview of the recent Ofsted review of RE, and the implications for Bracknell Forest SACRE.

It was noted that the new Ofsted HMI was an RE specialist who had sat on Norfolk SACRE, and he would now be setting the bar for future syllabus reviews and the RE curriculum. The curriculum needed to give children a cumulative look at religious views throughout their schooling, with ambitious end goals. The phrasing throughout the review of RE included a multi-religious and multi-secular world, and SACRE members welcomed the broad range of belief included in these phrases.

SACRE members were encouraged to read the review report or the summary comments from Anne.

Arising from discussions, the following points were noted:

- Members were mindful that future syllabus reviews needed to take a holistic view of all the key stages rather than focussing on Key Stages 1 & 2.
- It was not clear whether there were any specialist RE teachers in Bracknell Forest, and members suggested including a question on the syllabus survey to ask teachers whether they or their RE co-ordinator held any specialist RE qualifications.
- The matter of teacher training had been raised at the NASACRE conference, where it had been suggested that trainee teachers only received 8 hours of training in RE for their qualification.
- Gareth and Anne agreed to look into whether any suitable virtual training could be offered to RE teachers. **(Action: Gareth/Anne)**
- Following the last RE teachers' network meeting, an evaluation form had been circulated which included a question asking teachers what their needs were. It was hoped that any training needs could be raised through this form.
- It was suggested that the faith leaders could offer support to RE teachers as informal training.
- Any further thoughts on the RE review were welcome by email to Gareth, Anne or Lizzie.

### 33. **Westhill project update**

Anne Andrews advised SACRE members that the Westhill project films, Real People, Real Faith, were now [available on the NATRE website](#) with lesson notes created by Anne and a KS3 teacher. Additional films had also been created in a Catholic church.

The launch event and presentation at the NASACRE AGM had gone well, and feedback had been overwhelmingly positive. It was hoped that further supporting documents could be prepared by teachers and faith leaders when it was safe to meet in person.

The films were now being circulated to a wider range of contacts who might be able to use them.

Arising from discussions, the following points were noted:

- It was suggested that the physical resources SACRE owned at the Open Learning Centre could be used in future films and digital resources to be used in classrooms.
- SACRE members discussed the use of different churches to reflect the different styles of worship and theology, recognising that Warfield Church was a more charismatic church than other Church of England churches. However, it was noted that the content of the films focussed on symbols of faith rather than on personal theology and were broadly representative of the Church of England as a whole.
- The films had been developed in light of the fact that it was difficult to get children on physical visits to places of worship. The films now offered insight into a breadth of faiths without leaving the classroom.

### 34. **Report from others who attended NASACRE AGM on keynotes and workshops**

Rajdip Marok-Dhanju presented her reflections on the NASACRE AGM.

It was noted that Anne Andrews had been appointed to the NASACRE Executive, and members congratulated Anne on her appointment.

Rajdip gave an overview of the two keynote speakers; Professor Denise Cush speaking on 'Authority – Power or protection?' and Dr Richard Kueh speaking on the outlook for RE and Ofsted. Presentations and recordings of the sessions could be accessed on [the NASACRE website](#).

Rajdip highlighted the following summary points from the conference:

- The importance of teacher and governor training
- The importance of collaboration between SACRE, which Bracknell Forest already benefitted from with the pan-Berkshire SACREs
- The importance of partnership working between SACREs and other organisations, such as universities
- The fact that 'Agreed Syllabus' needed proper maintenance in order to be effective
- The importance of SACREs holding authority by being a known presence in the Local Authority and schools

### 35. **Forward Plan**

Madeline Diver updated on the Forward Plan progress.

Progress on the Plan was good with involvement from almost all SACRE members.

All priorities were set to Amber, except from the network meetings which were green.

Local Authority member representatives on SACRE were due to meet in the Autumn to add to the work which Jill Hanson was doing.

Through the Forward Plan work, concerns had been raised as to whether any collective worship was happening in some schools. Jill was considering phoning schools to ask about their current practice, however it was noted that this work would not be well received at the end of the Summer term and should be postponed to Autumn.

SACRE members had found that some information was buried on school websites and it was sometimes difficult to find policies.

Arising from discussion, the following points were noted:

- SACRE thanked Jill Hanson in her absence for her hard work on the Plan.
- The Government had issued guidance for teaching in a balanced way post-COVID for best recovery, and had reinforced the fact that RE should be a part of a broad and balanced curriculum for every child.
- SACRE supported Madeline in her work and agreed to delay the targets on the Forward Plan in the best interests of schools.

**36. Any Other Business**

Anne Andrews advised SACRE members of the recent RE network meeting, at which teachers had admitted to doing little or no RE content during the period of remote learning. While SACRE understood the challenges put on teachers during COVID, it was noted that there was work to do to rebuild enthusiasm for RE in schools.

**37. Dates of Future Meetings**

9 November 2021

**CHAIRMAN**