



## **NOTICE OF MEETING**

**Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

**Tuesday 10 March 2009, 5.00 pm**

**Council Chamber, Fourth Floor, Easthampstead House, Bracknell**

**To: The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

ALISON SANDERS  
Director of Corporate Services

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Tuesday 10 March 2009, 5.00 pm  
Council Chamber, Fourth Floor, Easthampstead House,  
Bracknell**

**AGENDA**

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| 1. <b>Welcome and Apologies for Absence (Prayer to be led by Cllr Andy Blatchford)</b> |         |
| 2. <b>Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 November 2008</b>                               | 1 - 8   |
| 3. <b>Matters Arising</b>  |         |
| 4. <b>SACRE Membership</b>   |         |
| 5. <b>Budget Report for 2008/09 and Budget for 2009/10</b>                             | 9 - 10  |
| 6. <b>Artefacts Update and Review</b>  |         |
| 7. <b>Syllabus Planning Guidance - Jo Fageant</b>                                      | 11 - 14 |
| 8. <b>Bracknell Forest SACRE Prize Competition - Update</b>                            |         |
| 9. <b>NASACRE/Westhill Awards 2009/10 for Young Inter-Faith Projects</b>               |         |
| 10. <b>NASACRE AGM - 4 June 2009 in Birmingham</b>                                     |         |
| 11. <b>Berkshire SACREs' Conference 2009</b>   |         |
| 12. <b>SACRE Development Plan 2010-2014</b>  |         |
| 13. <b>Any Other Business</b>  |         |
| a) SACRE Shabbat – 28 March 2009, Reading  |         |
| 14. <b>Dates of Future Meetings</b>  |         |
| <b>Wednesday 8 July 2009</b> , Education Centre, Easthampstead Conference Centre       |         |
| <b>Thursday 5 November 2009</b> , Council Chamber, Easthampstead House                 |         |
| <b>Tuesday 10 March 2010</b> , Council Chamber, Easthampstead House                    |         |
| <b>Wednesday 7 July 2010</b> , Education Centre, Easthampstead Conference Centre       |         |

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON  
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
06 NOVEMBER 2008  
5.00 - 6.35 PM**



**Present:**

**The Free Churches:**

Rev Michael Bentley  
Paula Ridgway

**Roman Catholic Churches:**

Louise Birley  
Anne Gibbons

**Other Religions:**

Kusum Trikha, Hindu Faith  
Arfan Rashid, Muslim Faith

**The Church of England:**

Gordon Anderson (Chairman)  
Maureen Beadsley  
David Fawcett  
Julie Mintern

**Associations Representing Teachers:**

Felicity Allen, NASUWT  
Colin Hickson, NUT  
Mrs Samantha Hunt, ATL

**Bracknell Forest Council**

Councillor Andy Blatchford, Bracknell Forest Borough Council  
Councillor Mrs Dorothy Hayes MBE, Bracknell Forest Borough Council  
Councillor Ian William Leake, Bracknell Forest Borough Council

**Co-opted Members:**

Dr Katharine Hadfield, Baha'i Faith  
Gill Ledsham

**In Attendance:**

Jo Fageant, SACRE Associate Advisor  
Martin Surrell, Senior Advisor, Social Care and Learning  
Katharine Simpson, Democratic Services Officer

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillor Clifton Thompson

**71. Welcome [Prayer led by Councillor Mrs Dorothy Hayes MBE]**

Gordon Anderson welcomed all those present to the meeting

**72. Election of Chairman (clerk in the chair)**

**RESOLVED** that Gordon Anderson be appointed as the Chairman of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education for the academic year 2008/2009

73. **Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

**RESOLVED** that Paula Ridgway be appointed Vice-Chairman.

The SACRE thanked Louise Burley, the outgoing Vice-Chairman, for all the support and encouragement she had given SACRE over the years, and was pleased that she would be continuing as a member.

74. **Minutes of meeting held on 9 July 2008**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 9 July 2008 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

75. **Matters arising not already on the agenda**

Minute 61: Brackenhale School RE Inspection and Action Plan

Martin Surrell informed the SACRE that their concerns about the ability of Brackenhale School to teach a quality religious education curriculum on a carousel basis had been raised with the Head Teacher. The School had no plans to change the syllabus during the current academic year but the situation would be monitored.

Minute 61: Cranbourne Primary School

Jo Fageant reported that she was working on a supplementary paper focusing on the 'how' of teaching religious education to accompany the syllabus for the benefit of all Bracknell Forest schools and would shortly be attending a conference focusing on writing agreed syllabuses.

76. **SACRE Membership**

Gordon Anderson updated the SACRE on the changes that had taken place in their membership since their last meeting.

The Jewish Board of Deputies had appointed Rabbi Zvi Solomons to represent the Jewish faith at SACRE meetings, replacing the interim appointment Marcia Perkin. It was noted that Rabbi Solomons was enthusiastic about the work of SACRE and was particularly keen to become more involved in working with schools. Some concern was expressed at his non-attendance and the absence of apologies from him. The Chairman agreed to check that papers had been sent to him.

Councillors Mark Brunel-Walker and Ian Leake had replaced Councillors Scott Burrows and Trevor Kensall.

Work was taking place to identify representatives from the Buddhist and Sikh faiths to ensure that the SACRE was fully representative of all the faiths.

## 77. **Resources Centre and Artefacts Report**

### Bracknell Forest SACRE Resources Centre

Sam Hunt thanked SACRE for the additional funding that had enabled her to buy a number of additional items for the Resource Centre from Israel.

The artefacts catalogue had been updated. Colour copies would be sent to all head teachers with instructions asking them to pass them onto their religious education subject leaders. A copy would also be added to Bracknell Forest Council's website.

Work to publicise the artefacts collection was ongoing. A supplement had been included in the latest copy of the school newsletter Curriculum News and a brief presentation about the service had been made at a recent Welcome to Bracknell Forest Conference for new teachers. Since the introduction of the publicity leaflet there had been a significant increase in the number of loans occurring and the SACRE agreed that this was encouraging news.

### Resources at Ranelagh School

Copies of the letter sent by Gordon Anderson to Ranelagh School to express SACRE's concerns about the duplication of resources and the School's subsequent response were circulated for comment.

SACRE agreed that the School's response failed to allay their concerns and it was agreed that Ranelagh School would be asked to provide details of the contents of their resource and which organisations were borrowing items.

## 78. **Berkshire SACREs' Annual Conference - Review**

Following the successful 2008 Berkshire SACRE Annual Conference it had been agreed that a similar event would be held in 2009. It was requested that people forward any suggestions for speakers or subjects for workshops and presentations to Jo Fageant.

## 79. **Bracknell Forest Schools' RE Examination Results - Review**

Martin Surrell circulated details of the Religious Studies GCSE and A Level results for the academic year 2007-2008 to the SACRE.

### GCSE Results

Of the 1090 pupils in Year 11 during the 2007/08 academic year, 254 pupils had studied the Full Course GCSE and 427 pupils had studied the Short Course GCSE.

Of the 254 pupils studying the Full Course GCSE all except one pupil had passed and 168 pupils had achieved an A\* to C grading. On average both boys and girls in Bracknell Forest had achieved one grade higher in Religious Education GCSE than pupils nationally.

Of the 427 pupils studying the Short Course GCSE 215 pupils had achieved an A\* - C grading. Although the short course results were not as good as the long course results they were still significantly better than national averages with both boys and girls achieving one grade higher than the national average.

The difference in grades between the Short Course GCSE and the Long Course GCSE was a national occurrence and it was thought to be caused, in part, by the use of non-specialist teachers to teach the short course.

Martin Surrell agreed to identify the proportion of pupils achieving each grade nationally in both the Short Course and the Long Course.

### A Level Results

Of the 22 pupils who had sat the Religious Studies A Level exam all had passed and 16 had achieved either an A or a B grade.

SACRE noted that 10 of the 20 pupils studying for an A Level attended the same school and three secondary schools in the Borough did not offer Religious Studies as an option at A Level. Martin Surrell informed the SACRE that local collaboration meant that if one of the town schools decided to offer Religious Studies as an A Level option it might be possible to open the course to pupils at other schools and he would be investigating this possibility further.

The SACRE were encouraged by the results and felt that they showed that religious education continued to be taught to a high standard in the Borough.

## 80. **Bracknell Forest SACRE Prizes for Achievement in RE - Working Party Update**

Paula Ridgway reported that the working group had agreed that rather than running a large competition for a number of Key Stages it would be a more effective use of resources if a single Key Stage was focused on initially. The elimination of Key Stage 3 Tests from the school calendar meant that this cohort was less pressured than other Key Stages and the working group had been agreed that any competition would be focused on Key Stage 3.

A draft entry pack, containing a covering sheet, letter to head teachers and an entry form, was circulated for comment and the following points were noted:

- The focus of the competition would be the question 'How might Religious Education promote harmony in our community?'
- Letters publicising the competition would be sent to schools in the week commencing 12 January 2009 and the deadline for submission of entries would be 1 May 2009
- The Resource Centre would be the most appropriate place for entries to be sent to
- The entries would be judged on their message not the quality of the work
- It was expected that a variety of media would be used for entries and this would make capping the amount that schools spent difficult
- The working group would need to give consideration to how entries might be publicly displayed once the competition had closed
- The working group would need to give consideration to the make up of the judging panel
- It was hoped that the competition would, if successful, become a regular event and a budget allocated

The SACRE agreed that a monetary prize of up to £250 would be awarded to the winning school and certificates would be awarded to the pupils who had submitted

the winning entries. Martin Surrell agreed to identify the cost of designing and printing 100 certificates.

**81. NASACRE/Westhill Awards 2009/10 - Working Party Update**

Gill Ledsham updated the SACRE on the progress of the NASACRE Westhill Awards working group and a briefing note outlining the proposed project was circulated for information and comment.

Concern was expressed that the Working Group's focus had deviated from the requirements of the award and it was requested that the original briefing was revisited to ensure that the requirements were met.

The Chairman thanked the Working Group for the work they had done to date.

**82. Bracknell Forest SACRE's Annual Report 2007/08**

The SACRE considered the Bracknell Forest SACRE Annual Report for 2007/08 drafted by Jo Fageant. The draft Report had been based on the same template that had been used previously and the following comments were noted:

- Section 2.1.2 Locally Agreed Syllabus: A brief précis of the actions that had taken place following Ofsted's concerns about the ease with which teachers were able to interpret and use the primary syllabus would be required
- Section 2.2.2 GCSE: Martin Surrell would provide a breakdown of the Religious Studies GCSE results
- Section 5.3 Priority 4 To monitor and report on the quality of teaching and learning, including the use of resources, in Religious Education in Bracknell Forest Schools; It was confirmed that this had been taken from the SACRE's development plan

The SACRE authorised Jo Fageant to finalise the report, with input from Gordon Anderson and Martin Surrell, before it was submitted to the QCA by the deadline of 31 December 2008.

**83. Self Evaluation of Bracknell Forest SACRE - parts 3 & 4**

The SACRE considered Parts 3, 4 and 5 of the previously circulated Ofsted SACRE Self Evaluation Form and arising from the subsequent discussion the following classifications were agreed:

Part 3: The effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus

|    |   |          |
|----|---|----------|
| 3a | Review of the agreed syllabus                                     | Advanced |
| 3b | Using the national Framework for Religious Education              | Advanced |
| 3c | Developing the revised agreed syllabus                            | Advanced |
| 3d | Consultation/launch/implementation of the agreed syllabus         | Advanced |
| 3e | Additional guidance/monitoring and evaluating the agreed syllabus | Advanced |

#### Part 4: Collective Worship

|    |  |             |
|----|--|-------------|
| 4a | Practice and provision for collective worship  | Established |
| 4b | Monitoring the provision of collective worship and tackling issues of non-compliance | Established |

#### Part 5: Contribution of the SACRE to social and racial harmony

|    |   |             |
|----|---|-------------|
| 5a | Links to local authority initiatives promoting cohesion and racial harmony              | Established |
| 5b | Representative nature of the SACRE  | Established |
| 5c | Knowledge and understanding of the local religious, cultural and ethnic community       | Advanced    |
| 5d | Understanding the intrinsic contribution which RE can make to social and racial harmony | Developing  |

### 84. **Recruitment and Training**

Gordon Anderson informed the SACRE that he had attended a meeting for SACRE Chairmen and officers, in Lewisham, which had focused on two main issues; recruitment and training.

#### Training

A grant had been made available to train Group A SACRE representatives on community cohesion matters and a pilot training scheme had been launched. The scheme involved a two day training session however, places were limited to 30 delegates from SACREs across the pilot area of Greater London.

#### Recruitment

It had been acknowledged that the most common SACRE vacancies were for representatives of the Sikh and Buddhist faiths.

Jo Fageant informed the SACRE that two volunteers had come forward to represent the Buddhist faith on local SACREs and it had been suggested that one join Bracknell Forest's. Gordon Anderson agreed to contact the Bracknell volunteer.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families had made additional funding available to support SACREs and existing SACRE members. Part of this funding would be used to organise a series of one day conferences across the country and Jo Fageant would be circulating details shortly.

### 85. **Any Other Business**

#### Religious Education Newsletter

It was agreed that the previously circulated draft newsletter was an excellent publication and that it should be distributed to schools across the Borough on a termly basis. Funding to help with the production costs would be made available from the SACRE's budget and invoices were to be sent to Martin Surrell.



Julie Graham

The SACRE was informed that former SACRE member Julie Graham was continuing her religious education development work and an article discussing this had been published in the latest edition of Dialogue Australasia magazine.

86. **Dates of Future Meetings**

The SACRE noted that future meetings would be held on:

Tuesday 10 March 2009 at 5pm in the Council Chamber, Easthampstead House  
Wednesday 8 July 2009 at 5pm in Easthampstead Park Education Centre

**CHAIRMAN**

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## SACRE Budget Report 2008-09

The SACRE base annual budget has been £3620 for some years. A further allocation has been added for the past two years to cover the cost of engaging Jo Fageant to write the Annual Report and provide support for the SACRE meetings.

The total budget allocation for 2008-09 was **£5,480.00**

Expenditure to date in 2008-09 has been;

|                                  |                  |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Professional subscriptions       | 111.00           |
| Mileage allowance claims         | 111.05           |
| Learning resources purchase      | 150.00           |
| Print room reprographics charges | 280.00           |
| Conference fees and expenses     | 338.28           |
| Consultants fees                 | 924.61           |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>£1,914.94</b> |

Commitments for the remainder of 2008-09;

|                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Consultants fees (1) | 140.00           |
| Consultants fees (2) | to be advised    |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>£140.00 +</b> |

- (1) Support for March meeting
- (2) Preparation and writing of paper on planning RE

Additional commitments agreed in 2008-09 carried forward to 2009-10 budget;

|                                  |                |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| SACRE competition prize          | 250.00         |
| Print room reprographics charges | c50.00         |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>£300.00</b> |

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## Planning RE using the pan-‘Berkshire’ RE syllabus.

Some teachers have had little or no access to planning-related training since the publication of the most recent RE syllabus in the local authorities that used to be a county known as Berkshire. As a consequence there is still considerable uncertainty about how best to use the document to draw up school RE schemes of work. These notes are intended to provide some guidance.

The syllabus looks as it does because all the interrelated bits of content have been set out in a format that demonstrates the character of RE which the syllabus is encouraging. Two factors have influenced the format in which it was published:

- Enquiry and exploration: during the development of the syllabus, working parties of teachers turned the theme titles outlined for each key stage in the QCA/DCSF Non-statutory Framework for RE (NSNFRE) into questions in order to establish the principle that religious education should be about exploring ideas, enquiring into religious and belief traditions rather than the simple acquisition of religious knowledge.
- Breadth of study: it was decided to group the themes/questions to ensure that each religion studied was approached in a broad and balanced way ie pupils would need to engage with key beliefs and teachings (blue sections), how key beliefs and teachings are applied in the everyday life of believers (yellow sections) and how key beliefs and teachings are expressed in symbolism, art and worship (mauve sections). This notion reflects the strands of *Learning about religion* within the level descriptions as set out in the grid on pages 15-16 (ie ‘what people believe’, ‘what people do’, and ‘how people express themselves’). These three groupings were colour coded (which of course is not obvious if you just have a black and white photocopy of the document!) to help users focus on these three strands of enquiry.

In the introduction to each key stage section of the syllabus (p25, p51, p82) there are an important few paragraphs about how questions in different coloured sections relate to one another and will rarely be studied in isolation. For example: the story of the nativity is taught in KS1 when partially answering the ‘blue’ question *Why is the story of the life of Jesus so important to Christians?* (p30) and also needs to be covered when answering the ‘mauve’ question, *How and why do Christians celebrate important times in the life of Jesus?* (p45). It makes sense, therefore to plan a unit of work which addresses both questions together. Similarly in KS2 all three of the following questions, each from a different colour section can be explored together if combined in a new question, ‘Why is the Langar an important part of Sikh religious life?’: *What do Sikh scriptures teach about God, the world and human life?* (p58); *How is Sikhism practised and passed on in families and communities?* (p67); *How do features of gurdwaras illustrate key Sikh beliefs?* (p77). Studying the beliefs of a religion without exploring how they are put into practice is a difficult abstract endeavour in primary schools. On the other hand exploring how religious people live their lives without reference to their beliefs makes no sense. It makes planning a great deal easier, therefore, if schools see the questions in the blue sections of the syllabus as questions which run through every unit of work and give meaning to questions from other sections. Planning can start from questions in the yellow and mauve sections, grounding all enquiry in human experiences, whilst referencing all these experiences to beliefs (blue sections) which underpin lives of faith and belief.

The examples above and in the syllabus, indicate that questions often need to be reworked into viable units of study for use in classrooms. In the KS1 example given above, the two questions addressed will only be partially answered because the focus of a unit of study will be on the nativity story and Christmas celebrations. Similarly, by focusing on the Langar, the

proposed Sikh unit of study only partially answers the three syllabus questions identified. However, in neither example does the syllabus require an exhaustive answer to its questions. It is a good idea to both combine and chunk questions into manageable units of study.

### Learning from religion

Although the syllabus contains *learning from religion* style questions, the examples given are not mandatory and they are easy to overlook. In so doing it is easy for planning to disregard this essential element of successful RE courses. Ideas set out below are intended to help teachers successfully include this aspect of RE in their planning.

First of all it's important to say that learning from religion is not something tacked on to learning about religion. Michael Grimmitt first wrote about learning from religion in 1987 when he said that RE must give pupils 'the opportunity to acquire skills which enable them to use their understanding of religion in the interpretation of their own personal experiences.' This aspect of RE is about making all the religious and belief related stuff which is the body of knowledge of the subject relevant to pupils. It should invite them to evaluate religions and beliefs critically, evaluate the truth claims made by religions and belief systems. Michael Grimmitt called this 'impersonal' evaluation. However, pupils should also be engaging in 'personal' evaluation of their own responses to the material explored and whether it has anything to say to them as they wrestle with making sense of life, themselves and issues of right and wrong (three strands of *Learning from religion* in the grid on pages 15-16).

The following outline is a method of planning which will ensure that pupils both learn about and from religion/beliefs at appropriately challenging levels of difficulty:

- Decide on what questions/topics from the syllabus are to be covered
- Formulate the question title of the unit of work (which can be refined later)
- Identify a key concept of significance to members of the faith community(ies) being studied encapsulated in the question
- Ensure this is a concept which can build a bridge between the religious material and the experiences of pupils being taught
- Decide whether to start the series of lessons with the concept from the perspective of pupils or with the religious material from which the concept can emerge
- Devise tasks, activities, experiences which engage with both elements AND are appropriately challenging as indicated by the level descriptions.

Let's consider how this process might look in relation to the topic examples considered at the start of this paper and how the focus on both strands of RE can help to fulfil Michael Grimmitt's aspirations for pupils' learning and personal development.

KS1 topic: Christmas

- Question title: How and why do Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus?
- Key concept: Celebration. This will work as a bridging concept because all pupils have experiences of celebration.
- Starting where the pupils are: what does it mean to celebrate? Do you like celebrations? What do you celebrate? What sorts of things do you do when you are celebrating? Begin to extend this to include experiences of others eg Can you think of celebrations other people have? How do they celebrate them? (Using all the ideas gathered, pupils could plan a celebration including appropriate food, gifts, cards etc)
- Enquire into religious context: Christians have a special celebration at Christmas. What are they celebrating? What is the story they are remembering about Jesus? How do they remind themselves of this story? What do they do to celebrate the birth of Jesus? How are the things they do connected with the story of Jesus' birth? Why do Christians think it is important to remember and celebrate the birth of Jesus? (To explore this pupils could enact a nativity play, design Christmas cards with a Christian message, take part in a carol service etc)

- Evaluation and reflection: Do you celebrate Christmas? Why/why not? How are your Christmas celebrations similar/different to/from Christian celebrations? What do you think is best about Christian Christmas celebrations and your Christmas celebrations?

KS2 topic: Sikh Langar

- Question title: Why is the Langar an important part of Sikh religious life?
- Key concepts: equality and service
- Starting from an enquiry into the langar: looking at pictures and/or film clips of the langar ask questions about what is going on? Who are these people? What are they doing? How are they seated? How are they served and by whom? Can you detect who are the people of status in this picture/film? etc – questions that help pupils see the concepts of equality and service in action in the langar. Explore Sikh teachings on equality and service and discuss how these are demonstrated in the langar. What do you think might be the impact of the teachings about equality and service on Sikh life? What do you think of a society which tries to live by these principles? Why were these principles so important to the Sikh gurus who established the principles of the religion?
- Pupils evaluate and reflect on their own thoughts and experiences of equality and inequality. Is it a good idea to believe that all people are equal? Is it possible to treat all people as equal? Does the context make a difference? How does it feel to feel superior to others? Inferior to others? How can we serve others? Can everyone serve? Can everyone be served? How do these principles apply to your dealings with others? To ways in which you would like to relate to others?

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