

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
7 JULY 2011
5.00 - 6.35 PM**



Present:

Felicity Allen, Associations Representing Teachers (NASUWT)
Councillor Dr Gareth Barnard, Bracknell Forest Council
Maureen Beadsley, Church of England (Chairman)
Councillor Andy Blatchford, Bracknell Forest Council
Madeline Diver, Associations Representing Teachers (VOICE)
David Fawcett, Church of England
Anne Gibbons, Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth
Kathy Hadfield, Co-opted Member
Councillor Peter Heydon, Bracknell Forest Council
Colin Hickson, Associations Representing Teachers (NUT)
Samantha Hunt, Associations Representing Teachers (ATL)
Julie Mintern, Church of England
Carol Nicholls, Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth
Paula Ridgway, The Free Churches
Joel Roszykiewicz, Buddhist faith
Councillor Clifton Thompson, Bracknell Forest Council

In Attendance:

Ms Jo Fageant, Oxford Diocese
Bob Welch, Chief Advisor

Apologies for absence were received from:

Priya Patel
Gordon Anderson, Church of England
John Baidam, The Free Churches
Rev Michael Bentley, Co-opted Member
Councillor Mrs Dorothy Hayes MBE, Bracknell Forest Council
Martin Surrell, Bracknell Forest Council

Maureen Beadsley in the Chair

183. Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 March 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2011 were agreed as a correct record.

184. Matters Arising not already on the Agenda

Minute 176: SACRE Budget – The £1,500 budget was confirmed for the current year and additional funding was available to finance the review of the locally agreed syllabus.

Minute 181: NASACRE Conference – For Information – Jo Fageant reported that she had been re-elected on NASACRE and that she was shadowing the Secretary with a view to take on that responsibility.

185. SACRE Membership

The Chairman reported that the following vacancies existed and that each organisation should be approached to nominate a successor:

The Free Churches - It was suggested that Easthampstead Baptist Church should be approached about providing a representative.

Associations Representing Teachers (NAHT) – It was noted that all schools should be contacted about the vacancy.

Associations Representing Teachers (SHA) – As above.

Jo Fageant noted that Maureen Beadsley would be stepping down as Church of England representatives on SACRE creating a further vacancy.

186. Bracknell Forest Faith & Belief Forum Launch Report - 8 June 2011

Members of SACRE had not been sent a copy of the full report as it does not mention Religious Education but an Executive Summary had been circulated by email. Michael Bentley had represented SACRE at the Forum and Joel Roszykiewicz had attended meetings and the launch event.

The report listed the people interviewed and the focus groups. The research had been commissioned by Bracknell Forest Council under the 'Prevent' agenda and Abby Thomas, Head of Community Engagement and Equalities, had been unable to attend but would be happy to return to a future SACRE meeting.

Members noted that the Executive Summary details identified concerns and the recommendations relating to schools were:

- Recommendation (2) Ensuring Primary and Secondary Schools have the capacity and skills to incorporate new Nepalese pupils
- Recommendation (5) Bracknell Forest will need to respond to the continuing demand for English as a second language in schools, colleges and in the wider community.
- Recommendation (14) A number of faiths have major resources, educational and other facilities in the Borough and efforts should be made to further engage and involve them in local forums and activities.

Members of SACRE were struck by the number of faith groups represented in Bracknell Forest and it was noted that community cohesion could not be taken for granted. It was agreed that Abby Thomas would be asked to attend the November meeting to give a presentation on the findings.

Copies of the guide to respecting and understanding the diverse Faith and Belief communities in Bracknell Forest were passed around the members present. Copies could be obtained from BFVA. A pdf of the document had been sent to all schools, doctors surgeries and members of SACRE. An update form was included in the

document to report any changes or errors in the information publicised so that these could be amended promptly.

187. Resources Centre and Artefacts Report/Update

Bob Welch reported that there had been four loans by three schools since the last meeting and that the artefacts remained in good condition.

SACRE discussed the proposal to extend access to the artefacts to schools outside of the borough for a charge. It was agreed that procedures would be developed and brought back to a future meeting and that the availability would not be advertised but would be promoted through word of mouth. SACRE agreed that Bracknell Forest schools should have priority and that once administration costs had been covered the additional funds would be used to replenish the resources especially for the very popular resources such as for the Sikh religion.

188. The Monitoring of RE and Collective Worship in Bracknell Forest Schools - Update

Bob Welch reported that the responses from the survey were still to be formatted into a report for SACRE's consideration but included a diverse range of comments which were influenced by the exclusion of Religious Education within EBacc (Item 9). The survey replies indicated that RE provision in the borough was considered to be satisfactory to good or good with room for improvement. The responses demonstrated the passion that RE teachers have for their subject and requested a revision to the list of speakers.

SACRE discussed their responsibility to monitor Collective Worship and how this was defined in Circular 1/94, how schools interpreted the advice and it was noted that strong requests had been made for this guidance to be reviewed.

189. Curriculum Review and EBacc Developments - Update

Members present discussed their continuing concerns about the absence of Religious Education from the English Ebacc. It was reiterated that EBacc was a performance measure and not an actual qualification. There are currently no arts or technologies in the EBacc. This was of significant concern to members of SACRE as it was felt this would impact upon the number of pupils choosing to learn RE and therefore the numbers of teachers specialising in the subject.

Jo Fageant explained that additional subjects would squeeze an already full academic timetable and that some schools ignore their statutory duty to offer the subject. She added that whilst ministers were 'enthusiastically supportive' of RE it was unlikely to be included.

Bob Welch explained that Head teachers needed to reflect the needs and aspirations of young people but the message to pupils should be that if they are good at something then they should pursue it. Members present noted the influence of parents on subject selection.

190. Locally Agreed Syllabus Review Outline Plan 2011-2012

Jo Fageant confirmed that both Slough SACRE and Reading SACRE would participate in the Locally Agreed Syllabus Review. Her report from the Berkshire Joint SACRE's conference would be circulated to all members once it was completed. It

was noted that the review ran in parallel to the national review of the curriculum and it was essential that this contributed to the process.

Analysis of Bracknell Forest teachers' comments would be circulated and they contained diverse ideas on the current syllabus with suggestions on improvements which ranged from slimming down the document to increasing detail in order to support inexperienced teachers. It was proposed that it could be spilt into mandatory and support material. It was also noted that the syllabus was reviewed five years ago and that some felt it was too soon for any significant changes.

The next stage in the process would be for the Agreed Syllabus Conference on 7 or 14 September to agree key principles. This would be followed by a series of teacher working groups during the Autumn. The next meeting would be held at the end of the next SACRE meeting in November.

Membership of the Locally Agreed Syllabus Review could be the same as SACRE as the composition was the same however each organisation would have to decide who they wanted to be represented by and formally appoint them. In addition nominations needed to be sought for teacher representation for each Key Stage working group.

191. RE Trails in Bracknell Forest - Update

The Chairman reported that no further information had been received from members on the local places of religious interest therefore no progress had been made since the last meeting.

192. Berkshire Joint SACRE's Conference - 28 June 2011

Gordon Anderson, Ranjit Bilkhu, Madeline Diver, Jo Fageant and Paula Ridgway attended the Berkshire Joint SACRE's Conference on 28 June 2011. Paula Ridgway apologised that she had not reported Ranjit's attendance previously. The conference report would include a link to West Berkshire web pages where up to date information would be posted.

193. Any Other Business

Thank you

As this would be her last meeting, the members present thanked Maureen Beadsley for her contribution to Religious Education in the borough both as an RE teacher and as a founder member of SACRE.

Maureen Beadsley thanked colleagues she had worked with on SACRE and in particular thanked Martin Surrell, Jo Fageant and Priya Patel.

In his absence, members present thanked Gordon Anderson for his Chairmanship of SACRE since its creation in 1998 and for all his hard work for the Standing Advisory Council over this period.

194. Dates of Future Meetings

Thursday 10 November 2011

The three proposed dates would be confirmed at the next meeting:

Thursday 8 March 2012

Thursday 5 July 2012
Thursday 8 November 2012