

NOTICE OF MEETING

**Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
Thursday 4 July 2013, 5.00 pm
Bedford Room, Easthampstead Park Education Centre -
Easthampstead Park Conference Centre**

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

- 1 If you hear the alarm, leave the building immediately.
- 2 Follow the green signs.
- 3 Use the stairs not the lifts.
- 4 Do not re-enter the building until told to do so.

If you require further information, please contact: Priya Patel
Telephone: 01344 352233
Email: priya.patel@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
Published: 25 June 2013



Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
Thursday 4 July 2013, 5.00 pm
Easthampstead Park Education Centre - Easthampstead Park
Conference Centre

AGENDA

	Page No
1. Welcome	
2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 March 2013.	1 - 4
3. Matters Arising	
4. The Humanist Perspective A Humanist representative to address the Group.	
5. Locally Agreed Syllabus and Related Training Update.	
6. Membership Update Democratic Services to provide an update.	
7. Draft Bracknell Forest SACRE Development Plan for 2013-2015 Members are asked to comment on the draft Bracknell Forest SACRE Development Plan for 2013-2015.	5 - 8
8. NASACRE Conference Feedback David Fawcett to feedback on the NASACRE Conference.	9 - 10
9. Joint SACRE Conference Carol Nicholls to provide feedback on the Joint SACRE Conference.	11 - 12
10. Any Other Business	
11. Dates of Future Meetings 7 November 2013 Proposed SACRE dates 2013-14: 13 March 2014 10 July 2014 13 November 2014	

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
7 MARCH 2013
5.00 - 6.25 PM**



Present:

John Baildam, The Free Churches
Ken Blanton, The Free Churches
Mr Christopher Smith, The Free Churches
Carol Nicholls, Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth
Joel Roszykiewicz, Buddhist faith
David Fawcett, Church of England (Chairman)
Mark Olney, Church of England
Councillor Andy Blatchford, Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Will Davison, Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Mrs Dorothy Hayes MBE, 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
Abby Thomas, Bracknell Forest Council (for Item 38)

Apologies for absence were received from:

Arfan Rashid, Muslim faith
Councillor Dr Gareth Barnard, Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Clifton Thompson, Bracknell Forest Council

35. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and invited Kathy Hadfield to open the meeting with a prayer.

36. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

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

37. Matters Arising

Further to Minute 28, Locally Agreed Syllabus and Related Training, Martin Surrell reported that training dates had been circulated and that he would be requesting Governor Services to consider providing training on the new Locally Agreed Syllabus in the next academic year.

(Action Martin Surrell)

Further to Minute 30, School Examination Results 2011 Review, Martin Surrell reported that he would circulate the validated results. He also reported that the

Government had withdrawn its proposals for the new English Baccalaureate Certificates to replace GCSE in some subjects and was now consulting on school accountability. Two key measures were proposed: the proportion achieving GCSE Grade C and above in English and Maths and the average points score in 8 subjects (English, Maths plus three subjects from the original list of baccalaureate subjects and 3 other subjects, one of which could be RE). It was agreed that the Chair write to the Chairs of Governors of Bracknell Secondary schools reminding them of the requirement to teach an accredited course as part of the Agreed Syllabus at Key Stage 4. (See also item 40)

(Action David Fawcett)

Further to Minute 31, SACRE Annual Report, Jo Fageant reported that she would be posting the Annual Report, as amended, on the NASACRE website.

(Action Jo Fageant)

Further to Minute 32, Practitioner Workshop – Religion and Belief, Discrimination and Equality, Madeline Diver reported that she had been informed that the outcomes of the workshop would not be published until June.

38. Membership Update and Census Information

a) Membership Update

The Clerk reported that the Reverend Ken Blanton had been appointed as a Free Churches representative.

b) Census Information

Abby Thomas, Head of Community Engagement and Equalities, Bracknell Forest Council, tabled a report detailing the results of the 2011 Census regarding religion in Bracknell Forest.

She reported that those affiliated with the Christian religion remained the largest group at 61% compared with 72% in 2001. This was the only group to have experienced a major decrease in numbers since the last census.

The second largest group in 2011 was no religion/religion not stated which increased from 25% in 2001 to 35% in 2011. All other religious groups in Bracknell Forest rose from a combined figure of 2.60% in 2001 to 4.46% in 2011.

The meeting noted the report and thanked Abby Thomas for her presentation.

c) Humanism

Martin Surrell reported on recent correspondence with a member of the public regarding humanist representation of Bracknell Forest SACRE. He had informed the correspondent that the matter had been considered in November 2011 and referred him to the minutes of that meeting on the Council website. However he did agree to raise the issue again.

A discussion took place during which some members expressed the view that, as SACRE was concerned with religious education and humanism was not a religion it should not be represented. There were also concerns expressed that the co-option of a humanist representative might set a precedent, encouraging applications from a variety of beliefs and practices. However other members noted that, according to the 2011 census, the second largest group in Bracknell Forest was no religion/religion not stated. It was also noted that a number of other SACREs had a humanist representative.

It was agreed to invite a representative of the Berkshire Humanists Association to the next meeting in order to outline what the Association felt it could contribute to the SACRE.

(Action Martin Surrell)

39. Correspondence with the Department for Education

The correspondence with the Department for Education regarding the potential impact on RE on the Government's proposal for the English Baccalaureate (now withdrawn) had been circulated and was noted.

40. Ideas on an RE Event for Pupils

The meeting discussed ideas for an RE event for pupils to be held in the next academic year. It was agreed that a proposal be submitted to the next meeting.

(Action Jo Fageant)

It was also agreed to purchase 6 copies of the recently produced dvd by Wokingham SACRE for KS3 pupils and they be sent to Bracknell Forest secondary schools with a covering letter from the Chair requesting pupil feedback.

(Action Martin Surrell/David Fawcett)

41. Locally Agreed Syllabus and Related Training

Jo Fageant reported that a Joint Conference for Berkshire SACREs would be held on 5 June to coincide with the publication of an Ofsted report on the teaching of RE.

42. Work Programme

Further to Minute 33 a) of the meeting held on 8 November 2012 the meeting discussed its future work programme and suggested the following for inclusion:

- Establishment of a Working Party to co-ordinate an RE event for pupils (Minute40 refers).
- Leadership of primary school RE Co-ordinators.
- Monitoring standards in RE.
- Development of a toolkit for collective worship.

It was agreed that a draft work programme be submitted to the next meeting.

(Action Martin Surrell/Jo Fageant)

43. Any Other Business

a) NASACRE AGM 2013

Jo Fageant reported that 2013 NASACRE AGM would be held in Birmingham on May 23rd and requested that any member interested in attending contact the Chair.

44. Dates of Future Meetings

4 July 2013, Education Centre
7 November 2013, Council Chamber

This page is intentionally left blank

DRAFT BRACKNELL FOREST SACRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR 2013-2015

To be reviewed Spring 2015

The key purposes of the Bracknell Forest SACRE are;

To ensure the continued development of an effective and proactive SACRE, offering high quality advice and guidance on religious education and collective worship to schools through Bracknell Forest Council based on a clear understanding of;

- the statutory requirements for religious education and collective worship
- the needs of Bracknell Forest schools with regard to religious education and collective worship
- current advice from the DFE, NASACRE and Ofsted

To support schools in improving the quality of provision by;

- maintaining a collection of artefacts, available for loan from the Education Centre
- encouraging meetings of teachers to discuss and share best practice

To promote the initiatives outlined in this plan through regular monitoring and evaluation and the annual review of outcomes.

Objective	Action	Timescale	Success Criteria	Cost	Key Personnel
Statutory obligations					
Produce an annual report on the work of the SACRE	Using records and papers of meetings, write a report, on the work of the Bracknell Forest SACRE.	To be presented as a draft to the autumn meeting of the SACRE	Finalised version of the SACRE report should be published and distributed to all BF schools by the end of January.	Up to one day of writing time	Jo Fageant
On going initiatives					
Annual analysis of GCSE and A level entry and results statistics	Analysis of information about entries and results compared with previous years and national data	Early in the autumn term	Analysis to be completed in time for presentation to the SACRE at the autumn term meeting (and for inclusion in the annual report?)	Within base budget	Martin Surrell
Review and amend/update a SACRE development plan	Review the development plan and up date it for the year ahead	For the autumn term meeting	By the end of the autumn term meeting an updated version of the development plan is agreed		SACRE and SACRE consultant

Objective	Action	Timescale	Success criteria	Cost	Key personnel
SACRE and schools to receive a newsletter about RE	Newsletter to be written, compiled and distributed on a termly basis	3 times per year?	Publication and distribution of a newsletter each term	Consultant time and printing costs	Jo Fageant in a consultant role
Ensure members are well informed about SACRE related issues and contribute to local debates on such issues	Support the organisation and planning of an annual conference for local SACREs: Summary analysis of conference evaluation to be produced Themes, venues and speakers to be organised Bookings made	By end of summer term; By start of calendar year By end of January	Conference organised according to the timings indicated. At least 5 members of the SACRE to attend the conference and be able to report back for discussion at the autumn term meeting	One sixth of the total conference cost.	Jo Fageant, officers and SACRE members from each LA Jo Fageant Jo Fageant

Ensure the SACRE is informed about the quality and diversity of RE in BF schools	Invite a teacher to make a presentation about an aspect of RE in their school at each summer term meeting	At each summer term meeting	Each summer term meeting receives a presentation which helps the SACRE to develop an informed sense of RE in BF schools	Gift tokens?	Martin Surrell
Ensure members are well informed about SACRE related issues and themselves contribute to national debates on such issues	Members of the SACRE attend relevant conferences eg NASACRE, Relevant information about RE identified in newspapers, journals etc to be made available to members	Nominations made as invited by conference organisers As appropriate	The SACRE is represented at all appropriate national conferences Members receive copies of up to date information/articles on RE and discussion of these is included in meetings as appropriate	Conference fees and travel costs incurred by representative Estimate: £100	Members of the SACRE All members – information sent to Clerk for distribution

For the period 2012-15

Objective	Action	Timescale	Success criteria	Cost	Key personnel
Improve communication with RE subject leaders	Request direct contact details with subject leaders in all schools	Initial list to be completed summer 2013 and then updated as needed	An email address for each RE subject leader	N/A	Martin Surrell
Support termly RE subject leader meetings with a view to them being self supporting by autumn 2014	Set dates, organise venues and advertise to all subject leaders	Annually at the start of each year	Termly meetings held with BF teachers increasingly taking responsibility	Initially consultant time	Jo Fageant and Martin Surrell
Produce collective worship guidance for schools	The SACRE to determine the nature of the proposed advice and organise a subgroup to work on it	By spring 2014	Useful guidance for schools on collective worship to be produced and made available on the BF website	Dependent on whether the resource is produced in hard copy	Sub group of the SACRE
Enable an event for pupils	Support RE subject leaders group to plan an event to engage pupils from BF schools that will enrich their experience and learning in RE	Summer 2015	BF schools have an opportunity to participate in an authority-wide event focused on enriching pupils experience of RE	To be determined	RE subject leader group supported by a sub group of the SACRE
Devise and offer to schools an RE competition	Decide on the nature of the competition, how and with whom it will be organised, timescales, prizes etc	By summer of 2015	Schools within BF will participate in the competition and prizes will be awarded. Press coverage to be organised	Cost of prizes	The SACRE or a sub group, representatives of the RE subject leaders group and Martin Surrell

This page is intentionally left blank

NASACRE AGM Report

The first speaker was Alan Brine who is a HMI with special responsibility for RE. He reported the position as he sees it.

The Department is about to publish its third report on the teaching of RE which is concerned with the realising of potential. 60% of the provision is less than good and there is a need to address the concerns about the quality and the provision. Recent policies have placed an additional strain and caused serious concerns. On the face of it 60% of pupils gained at least a short course GCSE but there is too much of an emphasis on the rote learning of facts about religions and less on the learning from religions.

SACREs are under strain and there is great variation in capacity. There are questions about funding and access. On the positive side there are some very good new syllabuses. There is a problem over the position of academies and morale and purpose issues with no clear understanding of where they are headed.

The period from 1990 to 2010 was good for RE with positive national initiatives. There was leverage to identify schools in various categories and the numbers entering for GCSE long and short courses were booming. There were bursaries for trainee teachers of RE, strong recruitment and RE had purchase and a sense of purpose. However there were cracks was RE only there because of statute or was there strong educational reasons for its existence? There were legal oddities - RE had to be taught in sixth forms but not in further education colleges. The GCSE short courses lacked rigour. SACREs were often fragile as was the National support. The teaching of RE was not improving in schools and its purpose was unresolved.

After 2010 the climate changed there was a collapse of support nationally. SACREs and hence SACREs were undermined. The coming into existence of Academies and Free Schools who did not have to follow agreed syllabuses caused problems. The GCSE landscape was changed.

There was some good news there was more innovative thinking. In some cases Academies were working well with their area SACREs. There were several new models for RE being trialled. The threats had generated debate.

There are several bodies moving forward the debate, Faith ambassadors from Secondary to Primary, Leading teachers of RE. Does RE try to align with the National Curriculum, RECs to provide a national syllabus? Are these five years just fallow years? Do we need a concerted campaign to raise the profile and to stress the importance of RE? Are the structures in place adequate? Are they a strength or a barrier? All these questions may need considering but it is difficult to move forward whilst the Government refuses to engage in meaningful discussions.

This was followed by a report By Dr Mark Chater. He wished to challenge SACREs. SACREs existed to help teachers and

teachers to help children. What help does the present structure provide? (There was a need to get more teachers into the SACREs) The challenges are many. SACREs are unique the system no other subject has such panels.

There are 154 SACREs and their position is ambiguous, some have little or no money to aid the improvement of RE teaching and its monitoring. Power has been devolved and SACREs defend the local determination of the development of RE. SACREs are semi-detached and isolated from the rest of the curriculum. The system is antiquated. SACREs can seek compliance with their ideas but have no means of enforcement. The Academy programme and the culture of school autonomy have created problems. The present structure of local determination creates additional problems and the aim to improve quality becomes irrelevant. It is an extravagance to have 154 syllabuses.

Municipal pride may stand in the way of National Quality. Perhaps we should investigate the concept of a National Curriculum.

SACREs would need to lose some of their freedoms. RE could be more innovative and the findings of research would be more likely to be put into practice. The advisory bodies should be open to all faiths. They would engage with others. Standards would rise by engaging with the real world and by making the subject more rigorous. Are we ready for change?

THESE ARE MY VIEWS OF TWO TALKS - OTHERS MAY HAVE INTERPRETED THEM IN A DIFFERENT WAY.

We had discussion groups and it might be better to look up the NASACRE web site to view the results of that. NASACRE is opening a newly developed website which only SACREs which subscribe to NASACRE will be able to access.

David Fawcett
23/06/2013

Agenda Item 9

The Berkshire Joint SACRE Conference: 6 June 2013

The annual Berkshire Joint SACRE Conference was held at Easthamstead Park Conference Centre on 6th June 2013. This year's conference was entitled "Realising the Potential". The keynote presentation was given by Alan Brine, the National Lead for RE and an Ofsted inspector. All Berkshire SCARE's were represented but Jo Fageant was disappointed in the low numbers attending.

The theme of the conference was, "Steps forward – where do we go from here?" Alan Brine said that he could have called the conference "At the cross roads" because RE was experiencing lots of challenges with present government policy. It is not the only subject that is affected by this.

The joint revised Berkshire syllabus is good.

The three year report on RE will be published in the autumn and it will show that at its best, RE is enriching and academically challenging exploring how we relate to one another.

However,

- § Too much RE is not good enough with little improvement - 60% of provision less than good
- § Significant curriculum thinking needed to address concerns
- § Concerns about quality and provision at GCSE
- § Raft of recent education policies placing additional strain on RE – although degree of damage still unclear
- § Policy changes raise serious concerns about the capacity of existing structures to support RE

According the NASACRE surveys and Ofsted evidence indications are

- § Many SACREs under increasing pressure
- § Increasing variability in capacity
- § Issues with funding and access to expertise
- § Academisation raises serious and immediate questions about future of SACREs
- § Morale and purpose issues

There were 15+ fat years 1990s to 2010

- § SACREs functioning well
- § National support strong – DfE, QCDA, Model syllabuses
- § Statutory requirement retains leverage - Ofsted
- § Broad consensus about RE – NSNF
- § GCSE booming.
- § ITE – bursaries, strong recruitment
- § Wider priorities giving RE purchase – ECM, Co Co,

But the cracks were there

- § Statutory v educational justification not resolved
- § Convoluted legal 'oddness' not addressed
- § Short GCSE – seeking 'relevance' not rigour
- § SACREs – fragile and variable
- § National support - similarly fragile
- § On the ground – little improving – status too low
- § Issues around the purpose of RE unresolved

And then the climate changed

- Collapse of national support structures

- LA/SACRE capacity undermined
- Academies and Free schools – increase fragmentation of RE
- Culture around ‘statutoriness’ shifts – Ofsted etc
- GCSE landscape shifts – status crisis in secondary
- NC – SofS imposing approach unfavourable to RE
- CoCo and ECM disappear as educational priorities narrow
- Religion – shift in public attitude? – militant atheism etc

There is some good news

- ⌘ Innovative thinking of some new syllabi -including our pan-Berkshire one
- ⌘ Some new models of partnership between academies and SACREs
- ⌘ Some academy chains exploring new models of RE
- ⌘ Threats have generated debate and interest – APPG etc
- ⌘ New networks to support RE – REQM, F2F, 3FF, Faith Ambassadors, Leading Teachers

We are where we are so do we

- ⌘ Try to align with the NC – using REC to provide national framework?
- ⌘ Stay detached, build capacity and plan for better days ahead?
- ⌘ Develop a concerted campaign demanding Govt action?
- ⌘ Work behind the scenes at local level to nurture best practice?
- ⌘ Seek new models of structures/purpose/curriculum?

In groups, delegates discussed possible ways forward for SACREs. What can Bracknell SACRE do to encourage best practice and carry out its statutory duties?

Suggestions:

- Merging with another SACRE to pool resources and ideas. (Two Berkshire SACREs already work together)
- SACREs might get together to train sixth formers (years twelve and thirteen) to become Faith Ambassadors and they would then visit primary schools – see Bolton website for more information.
- It was also agreed that SACREs should obtain copies of GCSE RE papers to acquaint themselves with the types of questions the pupils were being asked in the various short courses.
- Face to Faith – something set up by Tony Blair - <https://www.facetofaithonline.org/>
- A youth SACRE - <http://www.redbridgerenet.co.uk/>
- Invite schools to apply for the RE Quality Mark

Carol Nicholls