

**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