

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON  
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
9 JULY 2015  
5.00 - 6.45 PM**



**Present:**

David Fawcett, Church of England (Chairman)  
Councillor Dr Gareth Barnard, Bracknell Forest Council  
Ben Britton, NASUWT  
Rev Jackie Case, Free Churches - Methodist  
Rev Paul Collins, Church of England  
Madeline Diver, Associations Representing Teachers (VOICE)  
Councillor Ms Moira Gaw, Bracknell Forest Council  
Councillor Mrs Isabel Mattick, Bracknell Forest Council  
Councillor Ms Ash Merry, Bracknell Forest Council  
Carol Nicholls, Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth  
Chris Cooper, Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth (Observing)  
Mark Olney, Church of England  
Arfan Rashid, Muslim faith

**In Attendance:**

Anne Andrews, Oxford Diocese Adviser  
Chris Salt, School Adviser, Bracknell Forest Council

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillor Mrs Dorothy Hayes MBE, Bracknell Forest Council  
Manfred Lemke, The Free Churches  
Carol Logan, Church of England  
Rabbi Zvi Solomons, Jewish faith

**68. Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies received were noted.

**69. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to Minute 66 being amended to read that Ivy Court should be Iveagh Court.

**70. Matters Arising**

Minute 58 – The Chairman reported that his proposed letter to schools regarding the responses to the Collective Worship Survey had not yet been sent.

Minute 66 – The Social and Cultural Association of Dastyar was still being investigated by Ian Boswell.

71. **Presentation - Collective Act of Worship**

**Catherine Forrester, Headteacher at New Scotland Hill Primary**

Catherine Forrester advised members that the school had 235 pupils including nursery. Catherine circulated an agreement that had been introduced 18 months ago that pupils sign up to, which focused on the headings for respect for Yourself, Others and Our School. The school had a long-term plan for collective worship which supported thinking about special days that included national, international and current events. The respect headings each contained a set of values that were covered during assembly and Catherine briefly ran through the weekly assembly timetable.

Catherine advised that a quarter of the time during collective worship was spent on reflection and that the children helped shape collective worship by choosing songs, setting up the hall and lighting candles during reflection. Catherine advised that sometimes prayers were said during collective worship and there had been vicar representation from St Michael's Church but that more time was spent on reflection than prayer.

Catherine advised members that she would become the Executive Head of Winkfield St Mary's CofE Primary School in September and expected the school to follow a similar theme of collective worship to New Scotland Hill and to be Christian-based.

**Louise Fletcher, Assistant Headteacher and Pastoral Manager at Edgbarrow School**

Louise Fletcher advised members that the school had 1350 pupils and that a proportion of the daily assembly was reflection rather than collective worship.

Louise circulated an assembly rota which had a weekly Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) theme to the content of the assembly. Examples included World Braille Day and Holocaust Memorial day. Louise said some of the assemblies were arranged by the children and were meaningful and enjoyed by the children. Louise said if not reflecting as a year group during assembly then reflection took place during tutor time and that a similar assembly timetable was in place for sixth form pupils.

Louise circulated the school governors' SMSC policy. The paper outlined how SMSC development was supported in school, how it was monitored and reviewed and gave examples of SMSC development in teaching, learning and the curriculum.

The Chairman thanked Catherine Forrester and Louise Fletcher for attending the meeting and for their interesting and informative presentations.

72. **A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools**

The meeting considered the report entitled A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools, the authors of which were The Rt Hon Charles Clarke and Linda Woodhead MBE DD as part of the Westminster Faith Debates series.

The report included discussion on the Act of Collective Worship, Religious Education, Curriculum and Faith Schools. Recommendations made included:

- (a) *The current requirement in statute for an Act of Collective Worship should be abolished, and the decision about the form and character of school assemblies should be left to the governors of individual schools. Schools*

*should be required to set out their statement and strategy for promoting Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education, with school community assemblies as an important part of that strategy, upon which they would be inspected by OFSTED. The government should provide non-statutory guidance to help achieve this.*

- (b) The Religious Education syllabus in county and voluntary controlled schools should no longer be set by a system of agreed local syllabuses, but by an agreed national syllabus which would have a similar legal status to the requirements of other subjects in the National Curriculum.*
- (c) The local Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) are given a new role which includes participating in the consultations about the content of the national RE curriculum, helping local implementation of the national RE syllabus, promoting community cohesion and educating for diversity, and advising on local availability of religious instruction.*
- (d) Further effort be given to developing alternative proposals for fairer admissions procedures to faith schools, procedures which balance the rights of families of faith to have their children educated in that faith with other considerations of fairness to others and serving the whole local community.*

The meeting agreed that the current guidance which states that all schools should provide daily collective worship that was broadly Christian in nature was difficult to achieve as it involved pupils of other or no particular faith. It was noted that many schools had now replaced collective worship with reflection and that if reflection was made meaningful then learning would take place and it would respect those for whom worship was not appropriate or relevant.

The report recommended that consideration be given to using the phrase 'Religious and Moral Education' rather than 'Religious Education' but the meeting felt that 'Religious and Moral Education' was a rather outdated phrase. The meeting considered that some other parts of the report were out of date and did not reflect that pupils were encouraged to get involved in assembly and collective worship which could take place at any time of day in any normal group of pupils.

The report identified a number of specific and important roles for SACREs one of which was that SACREs should play a role in promoting the priorities of community cohesion and educating for diversity. Anne Andrews advised that the latest resident's survey showed a strong sense of cohesion between faith organisations and non-faith organisations which suggested good cohesion was being promoted by schools in the borough.

### 73. **NASACRE AGM**

Anne Andrews briefly reported on the NASACRE AGM held on 21 May 2015. The Rt. Hon Charles Clarke was the keynote speaker and he had suggested that the membership of SACREs needed to be looked at so that "they better reflect the modern situation". The meeting agreed with this and proposed that SACREs should reflect the modern situation or modern thinking in the area in which it sat (as opposed to national modern situations or thinking).

Anne Andrews reported that disappointingly not much time was spent working through the discussion support sheet for 'Meeting the Challenge' following the keynote speech.

74. **NASACRE Web Site**

Anne Andrews advised that the NASCRE website had been re-launched and would include a link to a members survey looking at the purpose of Religious Education. The link to the survey was not live and Anne said she would advise members when it became so. Anne said the new website was useful and informative and included lots of resources such as the Annual Report and various training sessions. Anne said she would be happy to present the new website on her laptop at the next meeting if that could be arranged. Anne advised that not all of the website would be accessible to those without a password which she proceeded to give out to members.

**(Action: Anne Andrews)**

75. **SACRE Briefing 8**

This item was covered as part of the discussions on "A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools" and the NASACRE AGM.

76. **Subject Leader Meeting and Hub Session Feedback**

Anne Andrews reported that five people had signed up to attend the Subject Leader Meeting but only one of those five people had attended along with four other subject leaders who had not signed up. Anne advised that attendees said they had found the meeting useful, they had shared resources and had discussed British values. Anne said she would request a copy of the minutes and would circulate them to members.

**(Action: Anne Andrews)**

Anne Andrews advised that a conference would take place between 10 AM and 4 PM on 03 September 2015 at Winchester University to discuss The Role of Faith in British Schools and look at the issues raised by The Rt Hon Charles Clarke and Linda Woodhead MBE DD. The cost of attending the conference was £12.00 and included lunch and tea. Anne Andrews said she would be unable to attend so all members were asked to check their diaries and advise the Chairman if they would be able to attend.

**(Action: All)**

77. **Joint SACREs Conference**

The Chairman reported that the conference was about building bridges between SACREs and bringing members together. A talk took place by a Religious Education teacher about arranging visits to places of worship. Conference attendees were split into groups which included teachers who said that when they arranged visits to places of worship they had found it hard to obtain payment from parents for their child to take part. The teachers stated that parents were more willing to pay for their child to attend an art gallery, for example. The meeting discussed that the local authority used to have a fund for this type of community work but no such funding had yet been agreed for this year. The Chairman advised that one of the teachers who attended the conference was a member of the NUT and he had suggested to her that she become a member of SACRE. The Chairman said he would give Anne Andrews her name so that she could liaise with her to follow up his suggestion.

**(Action: Chairman)**

Anne Andrews said work would take place to build up a programme of visits to churches within different Christian communities but stated that this was not yet a live

unit of work. The work would include looking at what teachers wanted from the visits and ensuring hosts were appropriate to the age group visiting. The meeting agreed that churches that meet in community centres should be included in the programme of visits. This may necessitate a representative from those churches visiting schools as community centres are often in use for other activities the rest of the time. Cllr Mrs Isabel Mattick said she would enquire as to whether Ascot Priory would be willing to receive school parties.

***(Action: Cllr Mrs Isabel Mattick)***

It was proposed that members advise Anne Andrews of church groups that would be willing to receive school parties so that a list of willing participants could be produced. The group discussed visits to places of worship of faiths other than Christianity and Anne Andrews advised that the mosque and synagogue in Maidenhead and the Buddhist Centre in Taplow would be happy to receive visitors. Anne Andrews said she would pass on the contact details for these venues to Ben Britton. Madeline Diver reported that members of the Faith and Belief Forum were also happy to go into schools and talk about their faith.

***(Action: Anne Andrews)***

Ian Boswell's replacement, Justin Whitlock, had offered to run a workshop for faith group speakers who would be willing to go into schools. Members discussed what the content of the workshop might be and agreed it should be linked to the Prevent workshop. Madeline Diver and Anne Andrews agreed to liaise about this further.

***(Action: Madeline Diver & Anne Andrews)***

#### **78. SACRE Development Plan**

The Chairman apologised to members that the previous Development Plan had not been fulfilled completely citing as an example that a proposed meeting between primary school children and secondary school children had not yet taken place.

Chris Salt said he felt that schools should have a better understanding of the work of SACRE and the meeting discussed how best this could be achieved. It was proposed that visits to schools could be made by SACRE members who best matched the needs of the school to share knowledge and offer support to what could be the only RE teacher in the whole school. It was agreed that visits should be supportive in nature and the SACRE should not be viewed as another Ofsted. Chris said he would put together a list of schools that would welcome a visit by SACRE.

***(Action: Chris Salt)***

The meeting discussed suggestions that the SACRE could become part of Headteacher induction and that an introduction sheet outlining the purpose of the group was sent to schools. It was noted that a SACRE newsletter was sent to Headteachers but there was concern that it was not circulated effectively amongst school staff. It was agreed that Chris Salt would liaise with schools a few weeks into the new term to obtain the RE leader's contact details for the newsletter to be sent to.

***(Action: Chris Salt)***

Anne Andrews spoke about a scheme called 'Young Ambassadors for RE' and proposed that SACRE visits to schools could identify young people in the borough who could become part of the scheme. It was agreed that Cllr Mrs Ash Merry would

look at how engagement with young people could be best achieved and in what setting.

**(Action: Cllr Mrs Ash Merry)**

The meeting agreed that the Development Plan would be a standard agenda item at future meetings for review and updates. Anne Andrews said she would send the Development Plan to Derek Morgan for him to circulate amongst members.

**Action: Anne Andrews)**

79. **SACRE Reporting and Evaluating Toolkit**

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

80. **Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

81. **Dates of Future Meetings**

It was noted that future meetings would be held at 5pm on the following dates:

12 November 2015

03 March 2016