

Supporting Religious Education across Berkshire:

Proposal for collaborative working of the 6 Berkshire SACREs (Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education) from summer term 2016 to be led by Jan Lever consultancy

Introduction

Following the success of the first pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub project (Crossing the Bridges), discussions about continuing pan-Berkshire SACRE activities took place at SACRE meetings during the autumn term 2015, and at a meeting of SACRE chairs on the 15th December.

The following proposal and provisional action plan is offered to all 6 SACREs for consideration at their spring term 2016 meetings.

Aim: to reach agreement across all 6 SACREs that the following proposal be adopted and the necessary funding sought, to enable more effective communication and collaboration between the pan-Berkshire SACREs.

Rationale for the proposal

In a climate of decreasing resources yet an increasing need to ensure RE is taught well, it is believed that 6 SACREs working together on some projects will enable a cost-effective use of resources with maximum benefit to teachers and pupils.

Context

The 2014 joint SACRE conference initiated the idea that greater collaboration between the 6 SACREs could enable better use of resources and expertise. Each SACRE has people from faith and belief communities who, working together, could support RE more effectively. This was shown to be true during the development of the current agreed syllabus, when faith communities collaborated very successfully.

2015 saw the 6 SACRE Chairs meeting together twice and successfully gaining a grant from the Culham St Gabriel's Trust of £2000 to pump-prime the Crossing the Bridges Project, bringing places of worship together with teachers to

improve the processes for school visits to places of worship to enhance RE learning.

The consensus was reached that there is massive potential for such collaboration of the Berkshire SACREs and that it would be beneficial to pursue this, especially thinking ahead to when the current agreed syllabus needs to be reviewed in 2017. Strong working relationships and effective communication processes could be built before the syllabus review, enabling this considerable process to be run smoothly.

The pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub was formed, initially represented by the 6 Chairs.

What is needed to enable this collaboration?

- Consensus and participation from all 6 SACREs
- Each SACRE being represented at every Hub meeting
- Funding from all 6 SACREs
- Synchronisation of SACRE meetings
- Co-ordination of the Hub
- Management of projects
- Effective communication systems
- Sharing of resources and collaboration

Proposed way forward for April 2016 to March 2017

- Strengthen the pan-Berkshire Hub
- Prepare for the agreed syllabus review
- Develop the Crossing the Bridges Project

Proposed plan with costings

1. Strengthen the pan-Berkshire Hub including preparing for the agreed syllabus review
2. Develop the Crossing the Bridges Project

1. Strengthen the pan-Berkshire Hub April 2016-March 2017

Appoint a Hub co-ordinator to...

- Schedule and organise regular Hub meetings from Summer term 2016
(at least one per term as agreed by the Hub)
- Plan the agenda in consultation with Hub, keep minutes and distribute.
- Develop a communication system to keep all SACRE members informed of Hub activity and progress
- Draft and co-ordinate the implementation of the Hub work plan, as decided by the Hub.
- Organise the synchronisation of the SACRE meetings to be held during the second half of each school term, and in the second or third week of that half term.
- Lead on the agreed syllabus review; drafting and costing the review project plan in summer term 2016.

Outcomes:

- Effective communication between the SACREs
- Well-co-ordinated and effective joint projects, including the review of the syllabus
- Well-informed SACRE members, increased involvement
- Agreed work plan for the Hub with outcomes stated and measurable (to be devised by the Hub, serviced by the Hub co-ordinator)
- Synchronised SACRE meeting schedule from September 2016
- Greater support for the teaching of RE than would be possible by each SACRE working in isolation

Cost: 3 days per term (9 days a year) @ £500 a day

9 x £500 = £4500 inc. VAT

Each SACRE contributes £750 inc. VAT in year 2016-17

2. Develop the Crossing the Bridges Project

Appoint a Crossing the Bridges Project Co-ordinator to...

- Implement the system developed during the first phase of the project for booking and evaluating visits to places of worship and visitors into schools
- Develop the Directory (electronic) of places of worship where hosts have received training and ensure its dissemination to schools (This strand of the project could be done by a teacher @ £200 a day)
- Continue to run annual training for hosts and teachers (one session in East and one in West) to involve more places of worship and schools in the project
- Disseminate the enquiry approach to visiting places of worship to all primary schools
- Increase SACRE member involvement with the project
- Give annual feedback to SACREs through the Hub as to progress of the project, school involvement etc

Outcomes:

- Increased involvement of schools in visiting places of worship i.e. more pupils have the opportunity to visit more places of worship and have dialogue with members of faith communities
- Increased participation by places of worship as hosts to schools
- Better informed hosts so more effective visits
- Better RE learning by using enquiry model and by face-to-face dialogue
- Evaluation mechanism in place to inform future steps of the project

Cost:

Project co-ordinator:

3 days per term (9 days a year) @ £500 a day

9 x £500 = £4500 inc. VAT

Each SACRE contributes £750 per year

Teacher (managed by Project co-ordinator):

2 days per term (6 days a year) @£200 a day

6 x £200 = £1200 inc. VAT

Each SACRE contributes £200 per year

Total contribution per SACRE 2016-17 = £950 inc. VAT

To appoint a Hub co-ordinator and a Crossing the Bridges Project co-ordinator (and teacher for Directory work) from April 2016 to March 2017 would cost a total of £10,200 inc. VAT

Each SACRE's total contribution during 2016-17: £1700 inc. VAT

Proposed plan April 2017-March 2018

This year will primarily be about reviewing the agreed syllabus ready to launch the revised version in the Summer term 2018

The Hub, serviced and supported by the Hub co-ordinator, would write a Syllabus review project plan in the Summer term 2016 with costings, for each SACRE to take to its LA to request appropriate funding.

The Crossing the Bridges Project should be well-established enough by April 2017 to continue under its own steam whilst the agreed syllabus review takes centre stage as the prime task for SACREs.

Estimated costs of syllabus review:

It is estimated that if each SACRE contributes **approximately £4,000** (including the £750 required for Hub co-ordination during 2016-17), this will be sufficient to cover all the costs. This is in line with the contributions that have been provided by each SACRE for previous syllabus reviews.

Rationale for requesting Jan Lever to produce this proposal

Detailed discussions took place at the Hub meeting in December 2015 about who should be appointed as the Hub co-ordinator and the Crossing the Bridges Project co-ordinator. (See the minutes of the meeting for further details)

It was suggested that it would be best for one person to take on both roles, and that this person should be experienced at leading agreed syllabus reviews as the pan-Berkshire review is pending.

The 3 SACRE advisers were present at the meeting and it made sense for them to be the candidates for these roles as they have a good knowledge of the

Berkshire SACREs, experience of working across several LAs, and have already been involved in leading on the Crossing the Bridges project.

Jo Fageant, having retired from her advisory role with the Oxford Diocese, was clear that she was not in a position to take on this work, although she will of course support the person who takes on the roles.

Anne Andrews, the RE adviser with the Oxford Diocese, volunteered her service for the roles, whilst requesting support for syllabus review work as this would be the first time she had taken on that task.

Jan Lever was happy to take on the roles on the proviso that she would manage all the work whilst delegating some roles to members of her team. Jan is an independent RE Adviser with a team of RE specialist consultants.

The meeting decided it would make best use of the advisers' expertise if Jan Lever's company was commissioned to take on both roles. Jan would manage the work, with Jo being involved as her capacity allowed, and Anne discussing with Jan how she would best like to be part of the work, and Jan contracting these aspects to her (paying the diocese for Anne's time).

How would the practicalities of contracts etc be organised?

Wokingham Borough Council offered to organise a variation of contract for Jan Lever to allow the extra work to be offered to her and to pay Jan for this work (as she is already contracted by WBC for her SACRE work), then invoicing the other SACREs (LAs) for their contributions.

ACTION needed

Each SACRE to consider the proposals and feed back to Jan Lever after their meetings, by Friday 18th March latest, to enable decisions to be made.

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Decisions:

1. Does your SACRE agree with the proposal to appoint a Hub co-ordinator?
2. Can your SACRE commit to its share of the funding for that post? If not, what level of funding could your SACRE contribute?

3. Does your SACRE agree with the proposal to appoint a Crossing the Bridges Project manager?
4. Can your SACRE commit to its share of the funding for that post? If not, what level of funding could your SACRE contribute?
5. Can your SACRE provide a representative (the Chair or another nominated member) to attend all the Hub meetings?
6. Is your SACRE prepared to schedule its meetings during the second or third week of the second half-term of each schools term, September 2016 onwards (or from April 2016 if possible)?
7. Is your SACRE happy for Jan Lever consultancy to lead the proposed work?

Jan Lever, January 2016