

SACRE (STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 13 NOVEMBER 2017 AT 6.15 PM

Committee Members Present

Group A

Catherine Jinkerson	Free Church
Anju Sharma	Hinduism
Shahid Younis	Islam
Shira Solomons	Judaism

Group B

Linda Galpin	Church of England
Rev Philip Hobday	Church of England

Group C

Stephen Vegh	Chairperson Secondary RS Teacher
Sue Cresswell	Trade Union Representative NAS/UWT

Group D

Philip Houldsworth	Wokingham Borough Councillor
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Clerk to Sacre

Anne Coffey

RE Advisor and LA Representative

Jan Lever

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chairperson welcomed members. Apologies were received from Lisa Cornwell, Michael Freeman, Beth Rowland and Celia Thatcher.

2 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Anne said that Michael had proposed Stephen for Chair; there were no other nominations, voting was unanimous and Stephen was re-elected.

Catherine proposed Beth for Vice-Chair; no other nominations, voting was unanimous and Beth was re-elected.

3 MINUTES

The Clerk pointed out that Michael asked for his role in Group C to be amended to Representative for the ATL Section of NEU, on the agenda and the minutes. Philip proposed that the revised minutes be accepted; Linda seconded, all agreed. The minutes were approved.

4 MATTERS ARISING

Minor matters arising from the June meeting were held over as other matters were more pressing.

5 PAN-BERKS SACRE CONFERENCE/CROSSING THE BRIDGES

Jan thanked Wokingham members for attending the Pan Berks Conference held in September; Wokingham was extremely well represented. For those unable to attend, she informed the group that Tristram Jenkins from the Westhill Trust had been present and had given a speech on the Crossing the Bridges project. The Trust had pump-prime funded the project and was very impressed by its achievements. He had attended one of the CPD trips to places of worship and been very involved.

Jan thought the conference feedback was positive, although delegates would like more time next year, with greater dialogue between differing SACREs/faiths/religions. Anju agreed that more time was needed and commented that it had been good to discover that different faiths have similar issues. Jan thinks we could offer another conference when the syllabus will be finalised, which could be a topic for discussion.

Shahid asked if any actions came out of the conference; Jan replied that they had not, as most discussion was about Crossing the Bridges, but she would like to get more teachers involved in the conference. The Crossing the Bridges report is now on the NASACRE website. Stephen asked if there was funding for continuing the project but the Hub funding is to cover the revised syllabus review and Westhill only offer funding to pump-prime projects, not sustain them. However, all agreed it was worth approaching them again.

6 RE SYLLABUS REVIEW

Jan provided information on the background of the October consultation days for different faiths, plus a breakdown of response areas and school types, along with the responses to the questions asked in the questionnaire sent out in summer. The consultation days were not particularly well-attended but there was a lot of constructive feedback, which Jan will be collating after the deadline of December 8th in order to present the first revision to the Hub meeting in January. At that point, the SACRE Chairs will take the draft back to their SACRE members and it will also go to the teacher focus group. The revisions must be finalised and agreed by May, ready for launching in June/July. Schools will have a transition phase from September 2018 with a view to the syllabus being firmly in place by September 2019.

Shira pointed out that many questions in the syllabus are 'closed' questions (i.e. eliciting only a yes/no answer); Jan agreed and will address this.

Page 29 of the agenda offers points to consider.

7 COMMISSION FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ONLINE CONSULTATION

The report from the Commission for Religious Education is an interim report which was compiled during the academic year 2016-2017 and launched in September 2017. The final version is due to be published in September 2018. The Commission is now asking for further feedback on certain areas. It has proposed the idea of a 'National Entitlement' statement for RE, because with increasing academisation, schools have far more flexibility and do not have to use a Local Agreed Syllabus (although they still have to follow the principles). The Commission's concern is how we can be sure that young people are receiving their entitlement to RE. Previously, each SACRE designed a syllabus relevant

for the Local Authority schools in their area, but the number of LA schools is continually becoming smaller.

Sue asked if parents would still have the right to withdraw pupils from RE; further consultation is needed on that but there are no apparent plans to remove this legal entitlement for parental withdrawal.

The interim report is calling for an expanded role for SACREs and a national plan for more training for RE teachers. There is also a suggestion that SACREs could have a role in community cohesion, which is a reasonable idea but a bigger role would require more ring-fenced funding.

There are no answers in the report, but it is raising issues and focussing on those issues which need more consultation. The Commission requests feedback by the **end of December 2017**.

Discussion followed: Philip wondered about the difference between a statement of entitlement and a programme of work. Shira pointed out that making RE a national curriculum subject would not necessarily guarantee a high standard. It was agreed that having RE as a subject for an Ofsted report would be good. **ACTION Jan to recommend that to the Commission on behalf of the SACRE. All members to consider the report and email the Commission, copying Anne, Stephen and Jan.**

The Pan-Berkshire Agreed Syllabus review.

The most pressing issue for discussion is which religions should be required to be taught at which key stages as compulsory. There was a call to make Islam a mandatory religion to be studied before KS3. Many teachers are already doing so. Discussion followed: Shira approves of flexibility; Catherine agreed that there is a need for flexibility but also that a teacher needs to know their pupils. How would a child feel if their own faith was not being discussed? Teachers are laying the foundations at primary level, whereas KS3 is a different level altogether. Stephen and Sue are being pushed for GCSEs and don't have spare time; they have to concentrate on teaching facts.

Jan drew members' attention to page 31 of the document pack, which covers the question of which religions should be taught at which stages. Members discussed the suggestions and felt that removing barriers between key stages is acceptable. The question arose as to how schools record what different pupils have studied. Catherine said the RE lead should be doing that. Shira suggested Headteachers should decide. Discussion followed over how we know what schools are doing. Jan pointed out that as at least 70% of Wokingham schools are using Discovery RE, we do know what the majority are doing. Linda asked if it were possible that areas of the syllabus might be omitted if schools were using Discovery RE. Jan replied not; if they are using Discovery, then they will be following the syllabus unless they are not using Discovery RE fully.

There is still work to do on Humanism, which should be covered in KS3. The British Humanist Association is producing some good material now; Stephen mentioned that they have been involved with GCSEs.

Stephen asked if members agreed with the proposed suggestions on page 31; six members agreed so the proposal was carried.

Regarding retaining attainment targets (page 32, item 2), Jan asked if we should change from using the 2 attainment targets (in the current syllabus) to summary expectations (same content, different format). Jan explained that she is constantly mapping Discovery

RE to different syllabi: most revised syllabi are removing the old 2 attainment targets but some have kept them – it is up to the SACRE to decide. Philip asked what teachers want; Jan responded that they prefer things to stay the same. It was unanimously agreed to keep attainment targets 1 and 2.

Members discussed how schools measure attainment. Catherine pointed out that RE is not on school reports. Jan informed members that in Discovery RE there is an assessment, recording and reporting process which shows progression by using three colours; she thinks it would be useful to write some supplementary guidance about assessment, possibly giving each stage a summary descriptor. All agreed.

8 DRAFT DEVELOPMENT PLAN/BUDGET FOR NEXT YEAR

Emily had provided the latest budget update, despite being ill and off work. There will be a cost this year to producing the new revised syllabus; Jan will prepare costings. When revisions have been completed there will also need to be a launch event. Anju suggested asking for Westhill funding for the conference/syllabus launch. **ACTION: Jan to approach the Westhill Trust for funding to cover the launch.**

It is hard to get staff out for RE events but a substantial number of teachers attend the launch of the new syllabus as they appreciate its importance.

Catherine wondered if some teachers using Discovery RE may consider it unnecessary to attend the launch of the new syllabus. To that end it would be a good idea to hold the conference in the summer and include a workshop on the syllabus and how it is linked to Discovery RE.

Shira referred to page 29, point 9, regarding appendices, commenting that an online document could be easily updated. Shahid suggested videos could also be included; Jan reminded all that we have to be mindful of the cost.

Regarding the development plan, Jan referred to page 41, paper 7, and asked if members would like to continue the induction and training for SACRE members; all agreed. Linda asked if Collective Worship could also be considered in training.

Stephen highlighted that our membership was reduced; we are missing representatives from Buddhism, Roman Catholicism and the Secondary Federation. Anne has approached the relevant contacts but with no success to date. If anyone has any potential contacts for membership, please advise Anne.

Jan reported that the network meetings were still well attended and teachers are still keen; notes on them were in the agenda pack. There is a turnover of subject leaders, so the RE Subject Leader training days need to continue.

Anju suggested we should plan the budget to include the syllabus launch; Shahid indicated that WBC budgets would probably be considered in December so we need to submit a request soon. **Action: Jan to liaise with Emily to arrange this.**

9 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT

The draft annual report was distributed. Jan asked members to email her with any amendments. Shahid asked where the report is sent; Jan reminded members that it is sent to NASACRE, DfE, WBC Councillors and WBC AGM. **Action: Members to email Jan with any amendments to the annual report.**

10 ACTIONS NEEDED BY EACH SACRE

Actions needed by each SACRE were covered on page 35 in paper 3, item 2 (Autumn term 2017).

Draft revisions have been considered. Any further revisions to be emailed to Jan. **Action:**
Members to email any further revisions to Jan by December 8th 2017.

11 AOB

The meeting finished at 8.15pm.

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