

The Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Minutes of Meeting on 6th February 2012

Present: **Group A:**
Shahid Younis, Kathy Turner, Dr Shira Lewin Solomons, Anju Sharma, Christine Morgan

Group B:
Jo Fageant, Rev. Stanton-Saringer, Rev. Lisa Cornwell

Group C:
Sue Cresswell, Lesley Green, Hilary Winter, Michael Freeman

Group D
Cllr Beth Rowland (Vice Chairperson), Cllr Kate Haines

In attendance: Jan Lever, LA Consultant

Clerk: Anne Coffey – WBC

Apologies **Group C**
Kevin Price

Not Present: **Group A**
Hardeep Singh Sahota

1 **WELCOME and APOLOGIES**

Michael Freeman, Chairperson, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Kevin Price. Hardeep Singh Sahota has not attended a year's meetings.

2. **MINUTES OF LAST MEETING MONDAY 21st NOVEMBER 2011**

Item iv – Change *at churches* to *in schools*.

Item vii – Change *Emily had three courses of an RE programme in the last two weeks which were successful*, to *Emily Waddilove had received details of an RE programme of three courses run by the diocese in the last two weeks which were successful*.

Change *A CPF booklet has gone to all schools in Wokingham* to *A Diocesan CPD booklet has gone to all C of E schools in Wokingham*.

3 **MATTERS ARISING**

I. **New Website Link**

Anne sent link out with minutes.

II. **Membership – Michael**

Michael asked to be advised of anyone interested in membership. There are vacancies for Free Church, Roman Catholic, Buddhist and VOICE (small union) representatives. Michael to write to Richie Thomson (Humanist).

ACTION – Michael to chase those who have not responded and write to Richie.

Michael commented on the lack of attendance of the Sikh representative. Anju advised that there is a local Sikh place of worship in Wokingham with a community centre downstairs and worshipping upstairs. Michael thanked Anju for the information and asked if she would email Anne with contact info.

ACTION – Anju to email Anne with contact details for local Sikh centre.

ACTION – Michael to write to Hardeep's community noting lack of attendance and advising of a more local replacement possibility.

III. **Display tour – Michael**

Michael suggests that Helen brings the display to the Revised Syllabus launch planned for June 29th. Helen is in Argentina at present.

ACTION - Michael to contact Helen on return re availability for launch.

IV. **Development Plan – Jan**

Hayley Davies-Edwards, School Improvement Manager at WBC, has agreed the SACRE budget to be the same as last year, showing the continuing WBC support for SACRE work. Jan explained the development plan which had been circulated, including costings.

Section A is about fulfilling the purpose and aims of the SACRE.

Section B is about supporting and monitoring teachers. The best option is to build relationships and a two-way communication channel. Jan suggested that the SACRE organises and provides a termly after-school network meeting for primary schools (attendance optional); a newsletter would be sent out during the half term when there is no meeting. This is an offering for schools which would normally be done by the LA but is an opportunity for the SACRE to take the lead. May 31st is the provisional date for the first meeting. The aim is to do the same for secondaries – have a meeting jointly with Reading secondaries. Piggott offered to host. These meetings will be more focussed than a socialising network meeting. Jan feels these are realistic aims and will be sending the same flyer to SACRE members and teachers for the network meetings.

Section C is about publishing the revised Berkshire Agreed Syllabus. Jan proposes an all-day launch conference, taking place on three dates. (Joint Wokingham/Reading launch to be June 29th). The changes to the syllabus would be explained, then the focus would be on specifics, in teaching/learning workshops. Teachers and SACRE members would be attendees. The LDS Church on Meadway has been offered as a venue for no charge, which is very generous.

a) **Secondary RE Network - Sue.** Sue reported that Jan led a very productive secondary RE network meeting on Jan 26th. Jan took everyone through the agreed syllabus, which was greatly appreciated by the schools. Leslie suggested that a primary network meeting would be welcome, advice and help with teaching and learning appreciated. Beth offered Southlake school as a venue as she is Chair of Governors there.

ACTION – Beth to liaise with Jan regarding arrangements for network meeting.

V. **Questionnaire responses for website – Jo**

Analysis more difficult than expected as Jo found some responses contradictory. Anne has put the link for responses on to the WBC website.

VI. **RE exam assessment – Michael**

Shira is not happy about the text in Victor Watton’s book. She will study the text and carefully put together a letter to the publisher and the Edexcel exam board. Michael suggested a supporting letter from SACRE which Shira agreed to.

ACTION – Shira to advise Anne and Michael when her letter is drafted.

4. BUDGET UPDATE

This was covered under item IV, in the development plan.

5. ANNUAL REPORT

Copies of the report were distributed. Michael asked everyone to take it home and read it and to send any comments to Anne (not him) for collating. Reverend Stanton Saringer asked if documents could be sent in .doc format rather than .docx.

ACTION – everyone to send comments to Anne.

6. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS – June 11th, 2012 was confirmed as the date for the next meeting. At that meeting we will decide on dates for the next year of meetings.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- **Jo** – Following last week’s NASACRE executive meeting a letter has been sent to the Department of Education as people were horrified to discover that all support materials for RE had disappeared from the QCDA website. A letter dated 19th January was received by the RE Council confirming that the government would not be reviewing RE guidance because it supports local determination. It showed interest in the RE community taking on the review – which would mean the RE Council but the REC has no government authority. There is interest in what the RE Council considers good RE.
- In October there was an RE Community weekend conference at Wokefield Park. A full report is on the website <http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org/> The REC has an action plan with five major points, each with a sub-committee: to promote high quality teaching and learning in RE; to influence public policy and understanding of RE; to promote a coherent professional development strategy for RE; to secure adequate and sustainable resources for the REC; to secure effective structures and operation for the REC. The government is giving full support to RE and local determination but has not understood the unintended consequences of decisions.
- **Shahid** – notified everyone that the [British Museum](http://www.britishmuseum.org/) has an exhibition ‘Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam’ until April 15th. Teaching aids are available on the website. Michael added that this is just one of several worldwide. In addition, there is a Museum of Islamic Art and History being planned for Canberra by Australian Muslims.
- There being no further AOB, the chairman declared the SACRE meeting closed at 7:42pm.

PART B OF THE MEETING: REVISED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE – Jo Fageant

Jo amended minutes from the November revised syllabus conference meeting as follows:

5th bullet point – remove *From page 27 onwards, the colour-coded questions are expanded; the lighter shades cover religions other than the compulsory ones. This format provides a 'thinner' syllabus but keeps the detail. The difference between what is compulsory and what is optional is much clearer. The layout offers the core religions with appendices. The statutory details will stay the same but appendices can be developed. Replace with In the current syllabus each of the key questions is expanded in relation to each of the compulsory and optional religions in each key stage. The review is suggesting that much of this material moves to appendices thereby creating a thinner syllabus but retaining the support needed by many teachers.*

8th bullet point – insert *Some* before *KS3 teachers*. Remove the sentence *If KS3 teachers ignore the syllabus they may have problems with the national curriculum review as it may be content-based.*

13th bullet point – amend *must* to *might*. Change *Guidance on devising these kinds of questions has to include training,* to *Guidance on devising the kind of questions included in the revised syllabus has to include training.*

- The agreed syllabus will be applied to the whole of Berkshire but independent or voluntary aided primary schools do not have to follow a locally agreed syllabus. Academies have to create an RE course whereby Christianity is the main faith and to take account of other faiths but they do not have to follow the syllabus.
- Shahid offered to investigate possible trainer to help teachers with subject knowledge of the Muslim faith.
ACTION – Shahid to investigate.
- Jo distributed a syllabus document which summarises the key issues in each section and alerts us to what is on the website. (West Berks is about to change part of their website.) The document contains suggestions of areas which might be covered. The Foundation Stage is finished, KS1-KS3 is still in process. KS4 – the government is clear that RE is still statutory for KS4. Post-16 remains unchanged. Everything is based on the non-statutory national framework. By the end of KS3 all students learn about Christianity and five other religions.
- Jo explained how more questions sit 'behind' the basic initial questions, based on the same themes as the existing syllabus. Key questions can be 'unpacked' in relation to each of the key religions. If these questions are agreed upon, there will be further questions which will appear in appendices.
- Shira expressed concern regarding the first question on 'Behaving'. Discussion followed regarding the wording of the question. Shira's point was that Judaism refers to the text rather than the teacher, which Shahid agreed with. Jo pointed out that the syllabus was following the themes of the original syllabus for KS1 as agreed. It was decided to continue with the original themes but that the discussion should be taken to the meeting

on March 19th at the LDS Church in Meadway, which is open to groups A and B. Jo emailed info last week.

- Anju queried what would happen if no representative of a particular faith was present at the March 19th meeting; Jo said we would do our best, as last time. Feedback can be given beforehand if it is difficult to attend the meeting. Let Jo know if you intend bringing other attendees.
- Jo adds new information to the website as and when it is developed and encouraged all present to keep updated via the website. Anne will re-send the link to members.
- **ACTION** – Anne to re-send link for syllabus review news.
- The second part of the meeting closed at 9pm.