

# The Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

## Minutes of the Meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2013

**Present:**           **Group A:** Shahid Younis, Catherine Jinkerson

**Group B:**  
Jo Fageant, Rev. Maurice Stanton-Saringer

**Group C:**  
Stephen Vegh, Michael Freeman

**Group D**  
Cllr Beth Rowland

**Co-opted**  
Daniel Thompson, Humanist

**In attendance:** Jan Lever, LA Consultant  
Anne Coffey – Clerk for WBC

**Apologies**       **Group A**  
Dr Shira Lewin Solomons, Christine Morgan, Anju Sharma, Sukhdev Bansal  
**Group B**  
Rev. Lisa Cornwell  
**Group C**  
Sue Cresswell, Lesley Green, Hilary Winter  
**Group D**  
Cllr Kate Haines

### 1) WELCOME and APOLOGIES

Michael Freeman, Chairperson, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Dr Shira Solomons, Christine Morgan, Anju Sharma, Sukhdev Bansal, Rev Lisa Cornwell, Sue Cresswell, Lesley Green, Hilary Winter. Beth informed Anne that Cllr David Lee will be replacing Cllr Kate Haines on the SACRE.

### 2) MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 25th MEETING

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting. Referring to the item about Richard Stanley leaving, Jan pointed out that today she had met Martin Baker (Richard Stanley's interim replacement) and updated him on the SACRE work.

### 3) MATTERS ARISING

- a) **WBC microsite** – Anne reported that the Wokingham Schools Hub is now live at <http://wsh.wokingham.gov.uk>. The number of 'hits' for the SACRE and RE pages have been very low, but now that the new location is live, the aim is to update everything and upload news from schools' RE network meetings plus a gallery of schoolwork. From September, there will be a concerted effort to publicise the RE pages and increase visits to the site.

- b) **Progress report from Daniel regarding the Humanist appendix:** Daniel met with David McKnight and a Reading Humanist and has a draft which he has been busy paring down and editing. He expressed a wish to work with someone with primary teaching experience and it was suggested that he approach Lesley Green. If Lesley is unable to help, Jan said to email her and she would approach Reading and Wokingham teachers. Michael asked if members were happy that Daniel remains on the SACRE until the appendix is completed; all agreed. **Action: Daniel to contact Lesley Green for input.**
- c) **Plan of action regarding directory of speakers:** Jan distributed her detailed plan of action and explained it. As well as requesting speakers, teachers would like more artefacts but have limited budgets, so Jan has included a request to communities for support with artefacts. Jo commented that Reading Museum has a collection of artefacts; Bracknell Forest Education Service also has a very good collection but it is rarely loaned out to schools. She suggested approaching them as a SACRE when the list of speakers was compiled. Dan offered to contact Humanist groups in Hampshire or Surrey for speakers. (Berkshire Humanists not very active). Jan stressed that once speakers were found, the first year will entail quality assurance and monitoring through feedback from schools and speakers. **Action: Jan to proceed with her plan of action and report back its completion at the next meeting.**
- d) **Calendar now on website:** the revised calendar of holy and other special days/events is now on the website at <http://wsh.wokingham.gov.uk/learning-and-teaching/religious-education/sacre>
- e) **Maurice's last meeting in June:** Maurice will be retiring but is currently remaining in his post until a replacement is found, so may possibly attend the next meeting. Michael made a presentation to him on behalf of the group and thanked him for his contribution to the SACRE. Maurice offered to approach Andrew Proud, Bishop of Reading, for a replacement SACRE member but suggested that Michael also write to the Bishop. Michael might also consider approaching St Paul's in Wokingham. **Action: Michael to write to the Bishop after approaching clergy at St Paul's.**
- f) **Presentation to Jo Fageant:** Michael made a presentation to Jo (originally planned for February but Jo was unable to attend the meeting) and thanked her for all her work on preparing the revised syllabus, about which he has received very good feedback.
- g) **King James Bible:** As an interesting, related item, Michael showed the group a King James Bible which Michael Gove has had distributed to all schools. It purports to be a facsimile of the first version but has a Roman typeface rather than the original Gothic typeface.
- 4) **PROPOSAL to retain services of Humanist representative** until agreed task completed. This was agreed in Matters Arising (3b).
- 5) **SHORT TALK on RE at Waingels College:** Stephen passed round an interesting summary of Religious Studies at Waingels College, including an example of how the themes are 'unpacked'. Waingels has 5 specialist teachers led by himself as Head of Department and recently gained an 'Outstanding' rating from Ofsted. Dan suggested Stephen's department could give feedback on CND 'Peace' resources

and offered some books on Christ in Art. Stephen invited any member of SACRE to visit the department. Michael intends to take up this invitation in the autumn.

**6) 'RE – THE TRUTH UNMASKED'.** Jan provided the 'Main Findings' pages from this report, (which is now on the RE pages of the Wokingham Schools Hub site). One finding is that in over 150 primary schools, some or all pupils were taught RE by someone other than their class teacher and in a quarter of these RE was taught by teaching assistants. Catherine is a Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) and attended the last primary network meeting. She pointed out that there are advantages as well as disadvantages, for at least when TAs are given RE to do we can be sure it happens and does not fall off the timetable, but teaching assistants do need support and training. Dan reported that Desborough is reducing RE teaching and abandoning GCSE RE. They will be visited by Ofsted in October. Discussion ensued over academies and what they are legally – versus contractually - bound to provide regarding RE teaching. There is no set ruling on the number of hours that should be provided and academies do not have to cover the RE syllabus - some academies cover RE only in assemblies. Schools are required by law to promote pupils' SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural) development and inspectors are required to inspect it, though Michael pointed out that inspection teams can vary greatly. Religious Studies can be a key contributor to SMSC. All present agreed that more clarity is needed. Jan said that the report has been presented to the government but there is no information yet on its progress, so the SACRE will need to keep up with developments. Michael recommended reading the Ofsted website.

#### **7) REPORT FROM NASACRE AGM**

Jan was unable to attend the NASACRE AGM. Jo attended and reported that it was more interactive than usual. Keynote speakers were HMI Alan Brine, Ofsted's subject specialist adviser for RE, and Mark Chater, Director of Culham St. Gabriel's. Presentations from both speakers are on the NASACRE website, [www.nasacre.org.uk](http://www.nasacre.org.uk), the main issues being the challenges faced by SACREs. Most delegates recognised the validity of what was said but wanted to know how to go forward. The NASACRE website has been re-worked and is now live. Notes from the meeting will go to the executive next week and then on to the website. After September, the website will be password protected and accessible only to those SACREs which have paid their subscription.

#### **8) SACRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

- a) **Progress:** When Jan met with Richard Stanley and Emily Waddilove it was agreed to keep the budget to the financial year. The new development plan has been reworked for the current financial year.
- b) **Budget Update:** Jan was informed at her meeting with Emily and Martin Baker that the SACRE would receive the same budget of £9,000. This will enable something to be done to support RE teachers, e.g. subsidising a day trip to a place of worship. The acquisition of artefacts was discussed by the group and it was decided that it would be better to produce an inventory of which schools had which artefacts. Jo reminded the group that Bracknell has a fantastic collection but logging and recording items borrowed is a complex task. [See **3**) Matters Arising c) above] Jan advised that Emily will be sending a list of school 'clusters' to her and the clusters could collate the inventories. Dan mentioned Starbeck, a specialist provider of artefacts which is based in Yorkshire but travels to schools nationwide with a stocked sales van. He will send details to Anne. **Action: Dan to send Starbeck link to Anne.** Michael suggested making links with Reading centres. The networks are the ideal place to initiate the scheme and a catalogue of artefacts could be devised. Priorities for schools are speakers, training and artefacts.

At the last Primary network meeting Jan showed the attendees the latest NATRE (National Association of Teachers of RE) Powerpoint on using 'playfulness in RE'. Catherine said that teachers were encouraged by the Discovery Scheme of Work but many have gaps in their subject knowledge. Also organisations may be running events that would be useful to school for their RE but the schools may not know about these e.g. the Easter Experience at her church was unknown to others. Information is passed via personal contact (e.g. parents) rather than by the SACRE, which should be used to its full potential but many people are unaware of the SACRE. Making contact in the search for speakers will help to publicise the group. Jan distributed text which she will submit to WBC for publication in the newsletter which goes out to governors at the end of term and will include input from teachers.

c) **Directory of Speakers:** Jan covered this in Matters Arising 3) c).

## 9) ANNUAL REPORT

Amendments and additions have been completed and the report is now awaiting the Chairman's foreword from Michael. Once done, it will be uploaded to the Wokingham Schools Hub.

## 10) NETWORK MEETINGS

Jan would like to hold a joint primary/secondary network meeting; the last secondary meeting was not well attended but the reason could be the time of year – Jan will review in the autumn. Catherine suggested asking non-attenders to host a meeting. Dates of network meetings go in the Education News weekly e-bulletin sent to schools and invitations go to subject leaders. Primary network meetings go very well - schools have been bringing examples of pupils' work. Schools using 'Discovery' have found it helpful – Jan will be adding an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) section to be available from September. There will be an added layer to the assessment process and further examples of level descriptions; all schools with Discovery will be sent these. Jan is planning a gallery on the Discovery website [www.discoveryschemeorwork.com](http://www.discoveryschemeorwork.com) where each enquiry (unit of work) will have its own section. Anything on the gallery from Wokingham schools will also be uploaded to the Wokingham Schools Hub. Jan will write about the network meetings on the website and will discuss at the autumn network meetings where to best spend the funding.

## 11) WESTHILL/NASACRE AWARDS

Jan was unable to make the deadline this year so there was nothing to report.

## 12) NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Shahid – a planning application is going through for a Muslim place of worship on the Reading Road. This could be ideal for school visits in the next academic year, especially as there may be an Islamic exhibition in October.

Shahid also invited members to visit on July 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> or 26<sup>th</sup> to mark the month of fasting which begins on July 9/10. (Wokingham schools' term ends on July 19<sup>th</sup>).

Jo – some Wokingham teachers attended a course on RE; she suggests that if secondary teachers are not keen on network meetings, perhaps the SACRE could consider subsidising a session with a noted speaker, similar to conferences held by the Secondary Federation. **Action: Jan to check with Gillian Waller if any training/conference events for RE are planned.**

## 13) DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is November 11<sup>th</sup>. Shahid had explained the difficulty of attending SACRE meetings as they often clash with Children's Services Scrutiny Panel

meetings, but November 11<sup>th</sup> will be free for him. Michael explained that other weekdays seem to be more difficult for most people. Dates for 2014 meetings will be Monday February 24<sup>th</sup> and Monday June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**14) AOB**

Jo reminded everyone of the Joint Berkshire SACREs conference on Wednesday; Michael informed her that he now could attend. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8:45pm.