

The Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Minutes of the Meeting on 11th November, 2013

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

Group B:
Jo Fageant, Lisa Cornwell

Group C:
Sue Cresswell, Lesley Green, Stephen Vegh, Michael Freeman

Group D
Cllr Beth Rowland

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

Apologies **Group A**
Catherine Jinkerson, Sukhdev Bansal
Group C
Hilary Winter

Not present Daniel Thompson, Cllr David Lee

1) WELCOME, APOLOGIES and ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Michael welcomed guest speaker Mary Watson from The Colleton Primary School. Apologies were received from Catherine Jinkerson, Sukhdev Bansal and Hilary Winter.

Michael and Beth stood down from their positions and Anne asked for nominations for position of Chair. Kathy nominated Michael, Anju seconded; voting was unanimous in favour. Anne asked for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair. Michael nominated Beth; Lisa seconded; voting was unanimous in favour. Michael thanked members for re-electing him.

2) MINUTES OF JUNE 13th MEETING

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

3) MATTERS ARISING

- a) **Progress report regarding Humanist Appendix for New Revised Syllabus**
– as Daniel was not present, this was held over. Michael advised that it should be submitted at the February meeting. Daniel's co-option could be extended for another year if there was a relevant project or assignment to give him. Michael asked members to email him with thoughts on possible projects. **Action: Members to email Michael with project ideas.**
- b) **Plan of action regarding Directory of Speakers:** Jan has found that this is taking a bit longer than hoped but it is in progress and should be ready by the end of term, to introduce in January 2014 .
- c) **Replacement for Maurice:** Michael is drafting a request which will go to Jo as the principal RE Adviser to the Diocese asking for an Anglican

representative to join the SACRE. He will be meeting Richard Lamey from St Paul's Church (Wokingham) this week, who is interested in education and the Revised Syllabus. He would be an excellent replacement for Maurice but this decision is in the domain of the Diocese. Michael will present a copy of the Revised Syllabus to Father Lamey.

Action: Michael to send letter to Jo.

- d) **Teachers' training events for Religious Education:** Jan related that at network meetings primary school teachers have said it would be useful to have training days actually in places of worship. There is some funding to enable this, so it could be investigated. In the meantime, at 10am tomorrow, 12th November, 2013, 11 Wokingham and 9 Reading teachers will be meeting at Reading Station and then visiting various places of worship during the day, including a Sikh Gurdwara, Synagogue, Mosque and Buddhist Centre. To maximise the visits, some SACRE funding has been used to take photographs of each location, which will be uploaded to the website. They will also be used in conjunction with enquiry questions in a Powerpoint presentation which will be on CD and available to schools (including those who did not attend the visits) for use as part of lessons. Mary commented on how useful that would be to teachers. Shira suggested having SACRE members' contact details available for schools; Jan pointed out that the directory of speakers would address that. Christine asked why no Christian churches were included but Jan explained that teachers had requested visits to places of religions about which they felt more uncertain, although it would be considered for next year.

Action: Jan to provide CD for schools.

4) PRESENTATION BY MARY WATSON (THE COLLETON PRIMARY SCHOOL)

Mary gave an interesting presentation about how The Colleton School delivers RE teaching. She said that she (like many RE teachers) does not have an RE specialist background. The Colleton is an open-plan team teaching school with three teams, FY1/2, Y3/4, Y5/6, and RE is predominantly taught in teams. Mary is working with the Revised Syllabus and 'Discovery' RE scheme of work produced by the Jan Lever Education Consultancy and has found it a really good source of useful ideas on different ways to approach the various topics. The Colleton enables cross-curricular learning, e.g. English is taught through other subjects such as History, Geography or RE etc.. For their work, KS2 children have an A4 planner in which they organise themselves and get signed off. Mary's presentation gave the following examples of RE teaching/learning:- questions, e.g. What gift would you give to Jesus in modern times and why?; a parent bringing in artefacts and explaining Diwali to pupils; KS1 having a day out to a synagogue and sharing information back at school. Mary said they find lots of different ways to inspire children, e.g. cooking, writing, making Rangoli patterns. RE is not taught for a specific set period each week, quite often a whole day is focused on it. Lesley agreed that it is common practice to work like this. The middle team recently had a day visit to a Gurdwara learning about Sikhism, through different activities involving food, decorations etc. and subsequent discussions at school. Although the time spent on RE will vary, teachers will look at plans and know what has been covered relating to the syllabus. On behalf of the group, Michael thanked Mary for a very interesting presentation and she then left the meeting.

5) DRAFT PROGRAMMES OF STUDY (Religious Education Council): This draft programme is now 'A Curriculum Framework for Religious Education in

England' as in item 8) b. Jan pointed out that it is worth being aware of a slightly different structure, i.e. three main strands are identified, as listed on pages 11/12, under A, B, C. Our key mission is to look at how the pan-Berkshire syllabus fits with this framework; it may have to be reshaped to align with it. The main area to consider is the issue of assessment. The appendix on page 26 gives a refreshing guideline. Page 28 onwards has a progression grid with end of key stage expectations for each strand. Jan stated that she is generally pleased with the document as programmes of study are clearly marked out and it is a positive document but it is just a framework – much work will be needed to produce a scheme of work for schools.

Jo commented that at the RE Council meeting last week there was an announcement that the DFE has agreed to fund an expert panel to look at assessment. How can progress be shown? Jan said that end of key stage expectations can be a good guideline but are not very specific measures of children's learning progress.

'Discovery RE' is in line with the framework but it needs to be mapped to show the synergy. Jo pointed out that the framework is a non-statutory document. Michael thought we need to revisit this; he spoke of some secondary schools taking the opportunity to allocate RE across the curriculum, some head-teachers thinking RE can be delivered via assemblies or given to teachers with curriculum gaps. He also commented that Ofsted inspectors seem obsessed with assessment. Academies are allowed greater freedom but still have to provide RE. Anju advised that new schools have recently opened in Wokingham Borough. (*Oakbank Secondary Free School in Spencer's Wood, and Charvil Piggott Primary School – strictly speaking not new but part of The Piggott School which is now 4-18 yrs across the two sites. Free schools Wheatfield Primary and Evendons Primary are expected to open in September 2014. Windmill Primary Academy opened in Sep 2013*).

6) JOINT SACRE CONFERENCE: project to recruit and train a team of student faith ambassadors. Jo is looking at this with the SACREs where she is adviser, i.e. Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead, Bracknell and West Berks, but it is at a very early stage. It has been discussed at secondary network meetings but has not progressed; it may not be practical to do it pan-Berkshire, but perhaps possible as pairs of LAs. Jan said it could be discussed at Wokingham network meetings but there are issues of time and cost and the SACRE budget will be smaller next year so care is needed. Jo mentioned an Ofsted paper on success at Redbridge which could be looked at but Redbridge is very different.

7) OFSTED REPORT (with reference to Joint SACRE Conference presentation by Alan Brine).

Jan referred to the key findings listed on page 5 as being very important, especially the fourth and fifth points. Some of it is about how well-equipped subject leaders are; often they are inexperienced staff under a lot of pressure. The question arises – what is the SACRE doing about it? Wokingham is very well supported, despite Emily Waddilove being the sole teaching and learning adviser left. Michael thinks Wokingham SACRE is gaining a greater profile. We are fortunate in being a county with six SACREs, each with different communities and able to respond to local issues. Jan will send to Emily a list of Wokingham schools which have not attended network meetings, so Emily can remind them. **Action: Jan to send to Emily a list of non-attending Wokingham schools.**

Jo referred to a provocative article by Alan Brine in the 'Latest News' section on the [RE Online](#) website. There have apparently been meetings with the DFE and some 'unpicking' of the report has been done (regarding the significance of key issues). Michael asked if members felt it worth responding to the report but they did not.

8) RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DOCUMENTS: A Review of Religious Education in England; A Curriculum Framework for Religious Education in England.

These were covered in 5). Members queried how RE can be delivered effectively when there is a lack of funding and of serious status of RE. Although it is not in the EBacc, Stephen said it is now in the 'best 8'. Michael suggested that to many people, RE is not an important subject. Lisa noted that 'religious' and 'worldviews' are included; Jan advised that it allows for other than the six principal religions. Michael reminded members that the SACRE has no powers – it can only observe but it can offer support for schools. Jo commented that all the Berkshire SACREs are effective. Jan pointed out that point 51 and onward in the Ofsted report has made the role of the SACRE even more difficult, even effective ones. Michael asked members to email any response ideas to him. **Action: members to email ideas to Michael.**

9) DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

Jan reported that many teachers are doing a good job and are committed and positive. Network meetings are well-attended and teachers are appreciative of the support, bringing children's work to meetings to share with others. Jan provides items of training and there is a theme each time. She listens to what is needed and brings it to the SACRE. It is costed, included in the plan and taken to WBC for funding approval, e.g. the teachers' visit to places of worship. Everything is on track and Emily provided Jan with the good news that the clerk's cost of £700 no longer has to be provided by the SACRE budget.

Primary schools have done well; there has been a focus on their main requests. Secondary schools have not had the same focused support and the meetings have not been so well attended but the last one was very constructive. **Stephen is organising the RE aspect of a secondary common inset day at Waingels College on Feb 28.** There will be workshops and speakers; invitations will be sent to secondary RE staff across Berkshire. The SACRE was asked if it would be willing to support the day with £500 from the budget. Jan gave figures for the budget as follows:- the total spent so far = £7,342 (covering meetings etc). The budget is £9,000 and there needs to be £1,000 kept aside to cover costs, which would leave £608, so £500 of that could be used to support the RE teachers' conference part of the inset day. Teachers will not have to pay. **Beth proposed we use the £500 for support and Michael seconded. All agreed.** (As organisers, Stephen and Sue did not vote).

Jo informed the group that Windsor & Maidenhead SACRE are holding an RE Conference with speakers (from RE Today) and workshops etc., in Windsor; the cost for the day will be £90 and will be offered across Berkshire. Waingels will still go ahead as theirs is an inset day, Windsor is not. Stephen will communicate with members via the clerk. **Action: Stephen to email info to Anne for distribution.**

Jan will provide the budget to members. The new budget, which is similar to others in Berkshire, is already set at £6,000. The current budget was bigger to enable the embedding of the revised syllabus. **Action: Jan to email budget to Anne for distribution.**

10) PROMOTING THE SACRE:

Catherine had mentioned to Michael that people she spoke to were not aware of the SACRE and she suggested something be done to publicise it more. Michael thought an explanatory leaflet (A4 folded to A5) could go online and a hard copy be sent to all Wokingham schools. Jo mentioned that Colin (a previous Chairman) had produced something similar. Michael advised that he had two boxes of SACRE files at home where it could be and he and Anne were planning on spending some time sorting these before the end of the year. Anju cautioned using contact details on a leaflet, as they expire, but a link to the directory could be used. It was felt that a leaflet should

go to Headteachers and Chairs of Governors. Michael and Jan will draft a leaflet and present it to the membership at the next meeting. **Action: Jan/Michael to draft leaflet.**

11) WESSEX JOINT SACRE MEETINGS

Jan announced that these do not take place until November 27.

12) DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT

Jan stated that it is becoming increasingly difficult to write a meaningful SACRE annual report, following the old format, so she suggested doing what some other SACREs have done, i.e. making it more like a newsletter, detailing what the SACRE has done. The Chair will still write a foreword. This is a responsive SACRE so it will be a positive document. Jo pointed out that nobody is analysing the reports, so it needs to be accessible to the schools who read it, although NASACRE may be about to ask that all reports come in a common format. **Action: Michael to provide foreword. Jan to provide annual report.**

13) NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Shahid – a decision is due at the end of the week on the new mosque, which is being converted from a current building.

Anju – Diwali has just taken place over the previous week.

Sue – a pupil at school got low grades in some exams but an 'A' in RE.

Kathy – three new classrooms have been built at the Roman Catholic school.

Lesley – took the whole school on a very successful trip to Salisbury Cathedral, used the day for literacy as well as RE. Michael asked if she would give a presentation at the next meeting. **Action: Lesley to prepare presentation for next meeting.**

Shira – there were many Christian people (from the CCJ - Council for Christians and Jews) attended the Succoth. A fundraising harp concert will be held at the synagogue on Nov. 30th. **Action: Shira to send details to AC for distribution to members.**

Beth – a Poverty Forum was held in Woodley with 70-80 church members holding discussions and putting together actions. Possibly support for CAP (Christians Against Poverty). The Earley Charity is now providing sponsorship for Beth to give primary school children lessons in financial awareness.

14) DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Monday February 24th, 2014 and Monday June 2nd. Lisa gave early apologies as she will be away for the February meeting.