

# SACRE (STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)

## MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 29 NOVEMBER 2021 AT TIME NOT SPECIFIED

### Committee Members Present

#### Group A

Catherine Jinkerson	Free Church
Beth Rowland	Free Church
Anju Sharma	Hinduism
Shira Solomons	Judaism

#### Group B

Rev Philip Hobday	Church of England
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#### Group C

Stephen Vegh	Chairperson Secondary RS Teacher
Julie Easton	Primary RE Teacher
Philippa Chan	Primary Headteacher

#### Group D

David Hare	Wokingham Borough Councillor
Jackie Rance	Wokingham Borough Council

#### Clerk to Sacre

Catharine Newport

#### LA Link / RE Advisor

Angela Hill and Emily Waddilove

### 1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chairman welcomed members and informed them of the later arrival of Shira Solomons. Apologies were received Shahid Younis.

### 2 MINUTES

There is one correction to the minutes of 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021. Item 2 referred to '*... the last meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021*' and should have read '*1<sup>st</sup> March 2021*'.

The Minutes were proposed by Beth and seconded by Philippa.

### 3 MATTERS ARISING

Emily raised the issue of membership. Since the last meeting Christine Morgan who was in Group A - *Christian denominations and other religions* and Lisa Cornwell was in Group C *Teachers, teaching unions and educationalists* have resigned leaving us with 6 vacancies on the SACRE: 2 for Group A (*Christian denominations other than the Church of England*), a representative for Buddhism (a long-standing vacancy), 1 vacancy for Group B (*The Church of England*) and 2 vacancies for Group C (*Teachers, teaching unions and educationalists*).

Catharine has emailed Churches Together in Wokingham and they have forwarded the email to their members, and this can be followed up on an individual church basis. Catharine also emailed Soulscape, a faith organisation working in a number of Wokingham schools and Nick Barnett has jumped at the opportunity to join. He is keen to join as a representative of Soulscape rather than a church and will, therefore, join Group C, if members are in agreement. The committee agreed that Catharine should contact Nick with details of how to be nominated to join the SACRE.

Catharine will also explore the possibility of communicating through WBC internal channels.

Beth pointed out that we should not forget that Woodley and Earley are not included in CTW and we need to be careful not to focus only on Wokingham town. Beth has invited several people to join Group A and is waiting to hear from them.

Personal invitation works best so we appeal to all SACRE members to personally invite anyone they think would be ideal to join.

#### **4 AUTUMN TERM 2021 - HOW ARE THINGS FOR WOKINGHAM SCHOOLS?**

Emily updated the SACRE on the latest developments in schools as follows.

Government requirements to minimise Covid infection were in place throughout the Summer Term but there are no requirements for the Autumn term although some schools have kept some measures such as staggered start and end times. This means that schools are left to negotiate with parents on issues such as not sending siblings into school where a confirmed case of COVID exists in their home. The LA has been trying to support schools through these negotiations with parents. Half-term helped to cut the infection rates which had been rising in the first half of the term but shortly after half term infections began to increase again. Infection rates are now higher in Primary schools than Secondary schools as many Secondary school students have been vaccinated.

There is now Public Health and Local Authority guidance for the whole of Berkshire West for the rest of this term which includes in secondary schools' students and staff wearing masks in communal areas; regular lateral flow testing for staff and secondary pupils; avoiding year groups mixing; risk assessments for things like Christmas activities and how to do those in a more Covid secure way; guidance on managing 'close contacts' of positive cases etc.

We currently have 27 schools in Wokingham operating under the 'Contingency framework' which schools come under if their number of Covid infections substantially increases and it is apparent that infections are occurring within the school. These schools have regular meetings with Public Health and the local authority to support them through the process of managing the outbreak. A whole class may be asked to take a PCR test and, whilst they are awaiting the results, asked to stay at home and participate in remote learning. There are also quite high levels of staff absence due either to them having tested positive or a close contact testing positive and this is causing greater pressure on the remaining staff as they provide cover for their missing colleagues.

The School Improvement team are only visiting schools where it is essential. This also means that for SACRE members, the advice has not changed and contact with schools should continue to be carried out remotely.

## **5 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

[This item was discussed as item 2 during the meeting]

Catharine had emailed members requesting nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair and advised members that she had received no nominations. Stephen and Beth were willing to stand for re-election and all were in favour, so they were re-elected: Stephen as Chair and Beth as Vice-Chair.

## **6 DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND BUDGET**

Angela updated the committee as follows;

*The following should be read in conjunction with the Development Plan in the Agenda Pack.*

### A. Core Business

1. We have already covered membership in item 3 matters arising where we outlined efforts being made to ensure we have as full and comprehensive membership as possible.
2. As a committee we get good attendance at our 3 meetings a year.
3. As mentioned in item 4 above, the current situation does not allow for SACRE members to visit schools.
4. The annual report is almost finished and has been produced in line with a new framework devised by NASACRE in partnership with the Department for Education. This new standard framework is designed to enable easy comparison of reports from the different SACREs, see national trends and offer SACREs appropriate support to enable them to fulfil their statutory duty and do the extras which enhance the experience of RE in schools. The report is due to be submitted on 30<sup>th</sup> December 2021. We are on track for this deadline, and it will be emailed to SACRE members for comment and approval beforehand.
5. Review of the action plan is currently being done during this meeting.
6. We are paid-up members of NASACRE and we present NASACRE updates at each meeting.

### B. Support for teachers of RE

Items 1-4

We have supported Wokingham Teachers comprehensively throughout the pandemic.

Every school received a free resource at the end of the summer term and training is being provided this term in the form of twilight sessions as a mini festival of RE.

We have dates for the primary RE network meeting in the spring term and for primary RE subject leader training.

We are thinking carefully and strategically of ways to support secondary schools during the rest of this year. The secondary federation INSET day is again not taking place this year. We have decided to have a network meeting for secondary school teachers in January. We will discuss with teachers at this meeting what further support they would like.

### Pan Berkshire Hub

We are entering into the syllabus review. We will discuss this more later in this meeting.

'Real People Real Faith' project is complete. Recording of the launch has been made available to teachers. More funding has been made available allowing the opportunity to include more faith representatives talking about diversity within religious traditions.

Emily provided dates for the next planned RE sessions as follows:

## **Secondary Network – 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

This meeting is designed to allow secondary teachers to tell us what additional support they require and will be OFSTED focused. We have invited the RE leader from The Forest School, who have recently had an OFSTED, to attend and share her experience of being inspected. Invitations for Secondary RE Teachers have already been emailed out and Stephen suggested making sure Julian Bushell is aware as he can ensure the information is disseminated to the RE leads. He also suggested getting in contact with the Head of RE at Maiden Erlegh as they have recently had an OFSTED inspection with a deep-dive for RS..

Angela stated that we will ask the secondary teachers if they would like to continue having network meetings going forward. They may find it easier to attend meetings online.

## **Primary RE Subject Leader Training – 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022 4pm – 5.30pm**

## **Primary RE Network Meeting – 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022 4pm – 5.00pm**

If any SACRE member would like to attend any of these meetings, please email Catharine and she will send you the TEAMS link.

### Budget

Emily talked through the budget as follows.

Following on from discussions at the last meeting about the money we carried forward from last year, we have sent every school a free resource and have provided 3 extra twilight training sessions.

We currently have around £600 in this year's budget that has not yet been allocated. Normally we would pay an amount to the Secondary Federation to support the training for RE teachers on their INSET day but they are not planning to do that again this year. Depending on what support the Secondary RE Teachers request at the network meeting in January, some or all of that money could be used to provide additional training for secondary schools, providing the SACRE members agree.

Stephen reminded the committee that if anyone has a project in mind that feeds into our development plan, please let Emily or Angela know as there is this funding available.

## **7 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT ON PREVIOUS ACADEMIC YEAR TO BE SHARED**

This has been covered in item 6 above. The new framework has been sent to everyone. If anyone has any questions about it, please email Emily.

## **8 FEEDBACK FROM TEACHER NETWORKS AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

Please see details in the agenda pack which provide an overview of what has been happening since the last meeting.

16 participants attended the Primary Network meeting in July 2021. This included an item on the 'Real People, Real Faith' project, aimed at people who had missed the launch earlier in the year. A video of the launch was made available to teachers. Teachers were shown how to access the 'Real People and Real Faith' resources with tips on how to use them.

There is one more session in the RE Festival to go. We have had really good numbers, with between 15 and 36 participants attending the sessions. The OFSTED session was the best

attended. We have received very positive feedback from these sessions. Beth attended training provided by Angela's colleague, Lat Blaylock, at RE today on Islam and thought it was 'Top notch'. Stephen attended training on OFSTED run by Angela and thought it was really useful and easy to digest.

We advertised to all schools a training opportunity offered by NATRE held in Milton Keynes. 1 Teacher from Wokingham attended.

## **9 SACRE PROJECTS**

Most items have already been mentioned in 6 above, however, Emily shared with the committee the 'Conceptual Understanding at the end of Key Stage 2 – pupil readiness for Key Stage 3' document. This document includes a page for every foundation subject, with the National Curriculum requirements followed by information about the concepts and skills that Wokingham teachers have agreed that children in Wokingham should understand by the end of Key Stage 2. This is designed to help both Primary and Secondary schools plan their curriculum to ensure a smooth transition. Previously this document did not include RE but, following the collaborative sessions with RE teachers earlier in the year, this page has now been included. Rather than the National Curriculum, for RE we have looked at the non-statutory National Curriculum framework and the locally agreed syllabus. This document is available on the Schools Hub and Catharine will email it to SACRE members to enable them to look at it in more detail.

## **10 BERKSHIRE SACRE HUB UPDATE - FEEDBACK FROM HUB MEETINGS**

Syllabus Review – Emily emailed everyone recently to ask if the committee are happy to continue collaborating with Pan-Berkshire in respect of the syllabus. There is no legal requirement for us to do so and we could have our own Wokingham syllabus. No one has replied to express any reservations with us being part of Pan-Berkshire Hub to review and share a syllabus after 2023.

We are currently surveying teachers for their views of the current syllabus and where they would like to see it develop in the future. There was a short window for teachers to respond as the survey closed on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021. There were around 40 respondents of which around 7 were Wokingham and 18 were Bracknell. The feedback seems to indicate a desire for a light touch approach to looking at the syllabus and bringing it up to date with current thinking and developments in RE. Angela asked for views on whether the survey should be re-opened to allow for more feedback. The committee's view was that the survey should be re-opened even if only a couple more teachers have the time to submit their views. Angela will inform the Hub.

There was discussion between teachers on the SACRE about the syllabus review. There is some agreement that a radical change to the syllabus could be positive, for example taking a multi-faith approach to units of work, but this is balanced with considerations of teacher workload and wellbeing. Angela reminded members that the new syllabus will not be implemented until 2023.

## **11 NATIONAL UPDATES RELATING TO EDUCATION AND RE**

Angela has provided the updates in the agenda pack.

## **12 NASACRE UPDATES**

Angela has provided the updates in the agenda pack. All information relevant to RE teachers has been included in Education News and forwarded to them via email.

The NASACRE conference is being run on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022, hopefully live. There is funding available if anyone would like to attend. Please email expressions of interest to Catharine.

## **13 AOB**

There were no other matters raised.

#### **14 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

7<sup>th</sup> March 2022\*, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022

\* Due to the current unpredictable climate, we are planning to hold this meeting in TEAMS. Whether the other meetings in 2022 will be held in TEAMS or live will be reviewed nearer the time.

The meeting ended at 7.32pm