

The Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Minutes of the Meeting on 13th June 2016

Present:	Group A: Sukhdev Bansal, Catherine Jinkerson, Fr Bonaventure Ndong, Anju Sharma, Shahid Younis
	Group B: Rev. Lisa Cornwell, Linda Galpin
	Group C: Sue Cresswell, Michael Freeman, Stephen Vegh
	Group D Cllr Beth Rowland (Vice-Chair) Cllr Chris Singleton
Clerk to the SACRE:	Anne Coffey
LA Representative	Jan Lever
Apologies:	Group A Christine Morgan, Dr Shira Lewin Solomons
	Group C Celia Thatcher
Not present:	Rev Patrick King
Guest:	Gillian Cole, School Improvement Officer, WBC

1) WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Stephen welcomed everyone and introduced Councillor Chris Singleton, who replaces Cllr David Lee in Group D. Apologies were received from three members.

2) FORMAL APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING Monday 8th February 2016. All present approved the minutes of the last meeting.

3) MATTERS ARISING.

- a) West Berks RE Trail and unused WBC SACRE RE Trail: Stephen has not yet discussed with Emily but will do so.
- b) Annual reports have been sent to NASACRE.
- c) USB sticks have been sent out and received. Jan showed the group the hard copy of the manual.
- d) September NQT event – Anne will man a SACRE table.
- e) Network meeting dates have been publicised to RE coordinators and in Education News (the weekly e-bulletin to schools)
- f) Teachers connecting with SACRE – Stephen will cover this later in the meeting.
- g) New constitution to be presented at July WBC meeting; Chris said he and Shahid would support this. Stephen advised that he needed to make a small amendment to the constitution first.

Action: Stephen to liaise with Emily about RE Trails.

Action: Stephen to make a small amendment to the new constitution.

4) PRESENTATION: 'Wokingham Schools – Monitoring, Support and Challenge'. Gillian Cole, WBC School Improvement Officer, gave a presentation explaining the role of the Council with regard to improving the Borough schools. Members had received copies of the presentation, which covered the broad responsibilities the Council has with regard to education, the role of the School Improvement Officers and how schools are helped and encouraged to achieve an

Ofsted rating of 'Outstanding' or 'Good'. Gillian focussed on the duty of schools with regard to SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural) development and the expectations of the DofE. Church schools have a SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspection every 5 years, which has to include collective worship. Non-church schools are not judged on collective worship but comment may be made on the contribution made to SMSC and behaviour and safety.

Questions followed:

a) Anju asked about academies; Gillian pointed out that WBC has no right of entry into academies but still has responsibility for children's outcomes. If academies want to work with WBC (which many do), they have to pay as WBC no longer receives funding for those schools. Plans are in place to further withdraw funding but schools may still need support. Academies are expected to hold each other to account. Sue mentioned she had recently attended a meeting about Multi-Academy Trusts, as Piggott School is now an academy.

b) Michael reported ATL's concern over the PREVENT programme; ATL believes it is important staff have access to proper and thorough training that allows them to raise their own questions about the PREVENT strategy. The online programme is thought to be too short and simplistic, and ATL is considering one-day courses. He offered to get details if anyone is interested. Another concern raised by Michael was the issue of items which are upheld in English laws but which some religions forbid. Gillian explained that schools are encouraged to open up debate and to safely explore difficult issues. Schools manage well but it is a challenge.

c) Shahid agreed with Michael regarding the PREVENT programme. Teachers have been legally obliged to report any suspected extremist behaviour to police since July 2015, and he felt that teachers' training on PREVENT could sometimes be questionable. He thought that they often took the safest option, which can have consequences for the child and family, e.g. the incident which was publicised in the national media about a primary school child who mis-spelled 'terraced' as 'terrorist'.

Stephen thanked Gillian for her informative presentation.

Gillian left the meeting.

5) SACRE BERKSHIRE HUB UPDATE.

The last Hub meeting was the first formal meeting since Jan was appointed as Hub co-ordinator. Jan went through the minutes of that meeting briefly:

Item 1: Jan asked members to delete the incorrect reference to the Bracknell SACRE Chair, who had resigned but had not passed away as was first thought.

Item 3: The SACRE meetings are now aligned so that there is a Hub meeting in the first half of every term, and a SACRE meeting in the first two weeks of the second half of every term.

Item 4: All six SACREs have now confirmed funding for the Hub. Jan reminded members that initial funding for the Crossing the Bridges project was provided by the Culham St Gabriel's grant.

Item 5: Jan explained that the principles for the Hub are reflected in the Wokingham SACRE action plan.

Item 6: The Hub is not planning a summer conference this year but members are working together to run one or two events per year, including induction for new SACRE members and refresher for current members. This training could be

incorporated in an evening conference where teachers and faith representatives could also be invited. Stephen suggested faith groups could be asked for speakers. Jan suggested holding it at the Holiday Inn at Winnersh Triangle (easy access from motorways) on Wednesday September 28th. Jan had been offered a good deal from the venue (£35 pp to include supper and venue hire) as long as each SACRE could guarantee a minimum of 4 delegates. Stephen asked for a show of hands if members agreed – everyone approved the idea.

Action: Jan to gain approval from each of the other Berkshire SACREs.

Item 8:The Crossing the Bridges project is running alongside the Hub. Jan reported that at the NASACRE AGM/Conference, delegates were informed that there was one Westhill award remaining and the deadline for applications had been extended to July 31st. She suggested to the Hub that they apply for this; they agreed that she should apply for additional funding to enhance the Crossing the Bridges project to include work that the current funding could not support. Jan asked Wokingham SACRE members to look at the application and let her know of any additional ideas which could be included, before the deadline of July 31. Michael asked who is entitled to attend the NASACRE AGM; Jan said anybody can go as there is funding in the action plan to cover attendance.

Beth asked about Anne Andrews' role; Jan explained that she works closely with Anne Andrews; they will both be reporting to Culham St Gabriels on the use of the grant received. Anne will be leading the Crossing the Bridges training but Jan is co-ordinating everything. Jan and Anne are both RE Advisers. Previous Oxford Diocese RE Adviser Jo Fageant is also involved with the Hub.

Action: all SACRE members to study the Westhill application and advise Jan of any additions before July 31.

6) EMBEDDED DEVELOPMENT PLAN/BUDGET

Jan reported that everything in the plan is on track. The regularly updated plan shows what has been actioned. Dates for the next academic year's primary network meetings have been finalised.

7) NETWORK MEETINGS UPDATE

Members had a copy of notes from the latest primary network meeting. Jan reported that the meetings are extremely positive. An impressive twenty-three teachers attended the last one on May 17th. All schools have received the USB stick. Jan said the focus will now be on subject leaders. Catherine attended the meeting as a teacher but was also positively received as a SACRE member and she urged SACRE members to attend a network meeting. She felt it would be so much more informative to meet teachers and hear their views, than simply talking about them. Michael asked if Jan could produce another colourful flyer with the network meeting dates on. Jan agreed. Secondary schools will have support with an event in February. Stephen commented that Wokingham is ahead of the game compared to other Berkshire SACREs.

Action: Jan to produce a colourful flyer publicising primary network meetings.

8) NASACRE AGM/CONFERENCE

Chris referred to the notes from the NASACRE Conference with regard to the statement about repealing acts of collective worship. Jan said the statement was from a report by The Rt Hon Baroness Butler-Sloss GBE, who served as Chair for the recent Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life. The report (December 2015) recommended that 'the legal requirement for schools to hold acts of collective worship should be repealed and replaced by a requirement to hold inclusive times for reflection.' The report suggests that changes in RE have not kept pace with the social changes and climate young people are living in and so this needs to be carefully considered nationally. The Butler-Sloss Report also suggests a

review of Collective Worship to make it inclusive, perhaps suggesting time for reflection to help children's spiritual development.

Father Bon added that it is not just changes to collective worship which could be of concern; he referred to the 'spirituality' part of SMSC, pointing out that there are subtleties that many people may not understand.

9) NATIONAL UPDATES:

'A New Settlement':

A New Settlement' is a report released in June 2015. (*Included in SACRE Briefing Issue 8*) It recommended that collective worship should no longer be statutory; that there should be a nationally agreed framework for RE designed by an expert panel and that local SACREs are given a new role including participating in the consultations about the content of such a framework, thus helping local implementation, promoting community cohesion, educating for diversity etc.

Understanding Christianity

Jan said there is a national drive to deepen young people's understanding of religions and belief systems by increasing their knowledge of the beliefs and concepts underpinning those religions/belief systems.

The new national project: Understanding Christianity, was launched in May and will offer training opportunities for teachers at which they will be given the new set of teaching resources. We will keep our schools updated on the opportunities and progress of this project over the course of the next school year

Humanism and GCSE.

Jan posed the question 'Is Religious Education complete if it doesn't study non-religious world views?' This needs more consideration in spring in readiness for revising the syllabus. Taking non-religious world views into account is becoming more of a requirement.

10) DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS: Nov 7th, Feb 27th.

Several members said Oct 31st was a difficult one, so November 7th was agreed on instead.

11) AOB

Shahid: reminded members of his invitation to the breaking of the fast of Ramadan and asked members to reply to him by tomorrow.

Jan: told members about some statistical data which Anne (Clerk) had sent to her. In Anne's capacity as System Administrator of the online school trip system used by schools, she is able to produce reports, one of which identifies the purpose of a trip by curriculum subject, e.g. RE. Anne has also acquired a report on website hits for the RE and SACRE web pages, which show a marked increase from 2014. Both reports are very positive; Anne offered to email the statistics to members.

Action: Anne to email statistics to SACRE members.

Stephen: urged members to keep an eye on emails regarding SACRE activity.

As Michael had been very unwell and was absent from the last SACRE meeting, the presentation to him as outgoing Chair was held over from the last meeting to this one. Stephen thanked Michael for all the work and enthusiasm he had shown over the years and presented him with a thank-you gift from the SACRE members. Michael replied with praise for the superb work done by Jan, commenting that the richness of her work is much appreciated and that she must be the finest RE Consultant in the south of England. He also gave praise to Anne, who he said goes well beyond the 'extra mile' as Clerk. The meeting closed at 20.30.