

Agenda Item 4

SACRE (STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2022 AT TIME NOT SPECIFIED

Committee Members Present

Group A

Catherine Jinkerson	Free Church
Beth Rowland	Free Church
Nigel Harman	Free Church
Anju Sharma	Hinduism
Shahid Younis	Islam

Group B

Linda Galpin	Church of England
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Group C

Stephen Vegh	Chairperson / Education Officer
Philip Theobald	Primary Headteacher
Samantha Lawless	Primary RE Teacher

Group D

Adrian Mather	Wokingham Borough Council
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Clerk to Sacre

Catharine Newport

LA Link / RE Advisor

Angela Hill and Emily Waddilove

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Nick Barnett, Linda Galpin and Jackie Reece.

Philip Theobald, who was replacing Philippa Chan in Group C as a representative of Wokingham Primary Headteacher's Association was welcomed to the meeting.

Clare Walsha, representing the Humanists UK was welcomed as an observer, she was considering joining SACRE following a request from Anne Coffey, (our previous SACRE clerk) some time ago.

2 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR - CLERK

As the meeting was not quorate, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting were proposed by Beth Rowland as being an accurate reflection of the meeting and seconded by Adrian Mather.

4 MATTERS ARISING

Matters arising were dealt with as the meeting progressed.

5 HOW ARE THINGS IN WOKINGHAM SCHOOLS? - EW

During the pandemic, Ofsted published a series of reports about how schools nationally were responding to and recovering from the pandemic. Their last report, in the summer term, recognised the excellent work schools had done to help children catch up on their learning. Many children have caught-up, but many have not, not just academically but in terms of wider skills such as behaviour and social interactions. There also seems to be a higher level of anxiety and lower self-confidence among pupils. All schools, including those in Wokingham, are working hard to address these issues. In addition, some issues which schools experienced prior to the pandemic have been exacerbated. These include children's absenteeism, staff shortages and difficulties accessing specialist support for children. There has been an increase in applications for special needs assessments. All of this resulting in higher workloads for staff.

Schools are now also having to cope with rising costs squeezing their already tight budgets. Additionally, even though our schools are full in some year groups, there is a need to accommodate additional children from Ukraine and Honk Kong.

So, although in theory schools have now returned to their normal provision, the issues they experienced before the pandemic have been exacerbated by the pandemic, the financial crisis and other world issues.

6 DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND BUDGET UPDATES - EW AND AH

The development plan at the last meeting was shared as follows:

Development plan

- **SACRE Membership**

We urgently need at least one new member of Group B - the 'Church of England' - to ensure we can have quorum. We currently have only one member and we should have three.

We also have two vacancies In Group A – 'Christian denominations other than C of E, and other religions'. We need to recruit a Buddhist member and a non-C of E Christian.

We have been actively trying to fill these roles but without success. If anyone has a person in mind for any of these roles, we would very much appreciate hearing from you. As always, the best way to approach someone is by personal invitation so please speak to your contacts about considering joining us.

- **Other points to note**

Please note, there is a typo on the document included in the pack. On the first page, the last column states 2019 to 20. This has been corrected but, unfortunately, the wrong version has been included in the pack. The correct version will be forwarded to you.

We have been making a lot of effort to engage with the secondary teachers. Having online meetings has been helping with this. We continue to make efforts to find out about their CPD needs and to provide the support they are wanting.

Budget update

Please note that the blue font indicates spending that's happened since you were updated at the last SACRE meeting. You will see that the total spent is roughly half of our allocated budget for the year and, as we are roughly halfway through the financial year, it appears we are on track. We have just over £100 in the budget that isn't allocated to anything yet. There is an ongoing item from the last meeting for anyone to contact Emily if they have any ideas for things that we could usefully spend that money on.

The following actions from the previous meeting were ongoing.

ACTION: Beth Rowland and Emily Waddilove to work together on budget for 2022-23 and include a wish list - ONGOING

ACTION: Everyone to contact Emily Waddilove with 'wish list' proposal if you have one - ONGOING

7 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT ON PREVIOUS ACADEMIC YEAR - EW AND AH

Emily Waddilove and Angela Hill had been working on the Annual Report and the draft wording will be emailed to members shortly.

There are just a few points that need to be addressed prior to it being ready for submission to the Department for Education by 31 December 2022 but we are on track to meet that deadline.

The report highlights the fact that we are a vibrant SACRE who are strong in many areas, particularly in respect of how much support we provide teachers in the borough and the ease with which teachers can contact us and be involved in networks etc. It shows that we are not just fulfilling but going beyond our statutory duties for the benefit of pupils and teachers in the borough.

Stephen thanked Emily and Angela, on behalf of the SACRE, for all their hard work in completing the report, which has been made more difficult since the required format has been changed.

8 FEEDBACK FROM TEACHER NETWORKS AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES - AH

Since our last meeting on 20th of June we have had one cross-phase face-to-face network which was very exciting as it was the first face-to-face event with teachers for quite some time following the pandemic. It was reasonably well attended with nine participants but only two were secondary teachers. There was a very collaborative atmosphere, and it was clear that teachers were grateful to actually be in the same room as other colleagues which allowed for informal chats and support in contrast to the rather formal online training.

St Crispin's School hosted the event for free and kindly provided refreshments. Feedback from the attendees was that it was a good location and so we have booked them again for March 2023. We will have some input with Secondary Schools before then so, hopefully, we will be able to encourage additional attendees from their schools.

The focus of the cross-phase meeting was 'Worldviews' and updating them on what is new in the world of RE.

So far, this Autumn term we have had the Primary subject leader training and a primary network meeting.

Normally the subject leader training is not run until later in the year, but we listened to feedback from Primary subject leaders last year who suggested that their training would be more valuable earlier in the school year. We had good feedback from that session and had 9 participants some of whom were new to the RE coordinator role and some of them were returning after some time.

The Primary Network Meeting - 4th of October - focused on 'ways of knowing' in RE which is something that's come out of the 'Ofsted Research Review into RE'. This session allowed teachers to engage with the latest thinking from Ofsted and gave them some practical strategies on how they can focus on 'ways of knowing' in the classroom. 17 teachers attended and the feedback was very positive.

Coming up, we have the secondary network meeting on 22nd of November and we will be looking at how to engage learners in RE KS3 in particular. The secondary twilight meeting on the 14th of December will be focused on KS4 provision in RE.

We have a cross-phase network coming up in in the spring term and then there are two further networks to come (one primary, one secondary) in summer 2023. The training focuses for those networks have yet to be decided because we decide them meeting by meeting to ensure they are relevant and are meeting the needs of the teachers.

9 BERKSHIRE SACRES HUB UPDATE - AH

Neither Angela nor Stephen were able to attend the SACRE Hub meeting but the focus of the meeting was the syllabus development. Those of you who are in Group A or Group B will have received an email recently asking for feedback on what you feel are the most important aspects of your faith for inclusion in the new syllabus.

The 'Real people, real faith' a project is still ongoing. Further funding has been made available meaning additional filming has been gone ahead to include different faith communities showing the diversity across communities with notes being prepared to accompany those films. Feedback from teachers indicates that they are finding the films very useful.

As the syllabus review has been postponed, allowing schools to recover from the Covid pandemic, Stephen asked whether there is any time constraint on funding. Emily confirmed that our Finance department are happy to make the funding available whenever we need it. The amount agreed is the same as for the previous review. Stephen pointed out that we are, as always, very grateful to Wokingham for making this funding available.

ACTION from previous meeting:

Stephen to discuss relaunching the 'Crossing the bridges' directory at the hub and raise the issue of whether places of worship are set up for online visits - ACTION ONGOING

10 NATIONAL UPDATES RELATING TO EDUCATION AND RE

There are a lot of updates, so we recommend you read the National updates for further details but here are some highlights.

Nationally we are seeing a rise in the number of pupils who are taking a GCSE full or short course in religious studies but, conversely, we are also seeing a fall in numbers for A levels. The National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) are looking into the reasons why that might be. RE is still very much the poor subject in terms of national spending. There has been some campaigning about this and last week there was a parliamentary debate - a link can be sent to you if you would like to take a look.

There is a proposal in Wales that the GCSE qualification will be constituted of 30% coursework and 70% exam and they will no longer offer the short course. Very often what happens in Wales has a knock-on effect in England, and vice-versa, so it would be good to be involved with the consultation.

The 'In conversation' series from Culham St Gabriel's is a series of conversations with people who are experts in a particular area of religion or worldviews. There is a programme of these events and you can go as a SACRE member. They are all free, online and last about 45 minutes. There are recordings available as well.

There are lots of new resources coming out. One very good example is the Jewish Museum in London. They have an inclusive Judaism package that really engages with Judaism and diversity within Jewish traditions.

'Strictly RE' is national conference for RE teachers. There could be an opportunity if any SACRE members wish to attend, please contact Emily and she will look into arranging this. This is a huge conference with keynote speakers and 21 workshops about many different aspects across all key stages. Most of the workshops are run by teachers who are in the classroom and are intended to not only help other teachers but foster understanding of what goes on in the RE classroom.

'Spirited Arts' continues and is NATRE's national competition for pupils to express their creativity and produce a piece of art.

ACTION from previous meeting

Angela to share Spirited Arts entries from Wokingham Schools at next meeting -
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11 NASACRE UPDATES

NASACRE have an online training programme and it would be great if SACRE members can engage with those training opportunities. Please contact Emily if you want to attend so she can make the arrangements.

We mentioned in our previous meeting about the NASACRE analysis of SACRE annual reports 2020-21, and we can see from this that the Wokingham SACRE is in a really strong and secure position funding wise.

12 WORLD VIEWS - AH

Angela presented on this at the cross-phase network meeting. Teachers were very enthusiastic on the whole about moving towards a worldviews paradigm but felt that they needed to have more clarity about what that means in practice within the classroom. This is something that we will bear in mind as we move forward with the syllabus review.

The draft resource will be reviewed by SACRE when there is more clarity over its status and purposes.

13 SELF-EVALUATION TOOL DISCUSSION - AH

The self-evaluation tool is intended to help SACREs fulfil their statutory duties and to perform strongly, making sure they are effective and beneficial to pupils in every local authority. It is a lengthy document and it would take a lot of time and resources to really engage fully with it in its entirety. We decided in a previous meeting that a good way forward would be to arrange a meeting between Angela, Emily, Stephen and Beth to discuss the document in greater detail and pick out the elements of the tool which we think would help drive the Wokingham SACRE forward. Anyone else wishing to join this meeting will be more than welcome. We will let the SACRE know of the meeting date when it has been arranged.

ACTION: Stephen, Beth, Emily and Angela to arrange a meeting before the next SACRE meeting in February.

14 AOB

Stephen reminded the SACRE of an action from a previous meeting for Emily to review the SACRE leaflet in connection with a symbol for the Christian faith as every other faith seemed to have a symbol. Emily explained that there are symbols representing three of the six major religions, and pictures relating to the other three religions.

It was agreed that, as the leaflet is updated every year, the pictures used would be considered next time it is reviewed.

15 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

6.15pm - 20 February 2023 – via TEAMS

6.15pm –12 June 2023– in person – David Hicks 1, Shute End

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