

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SACRE (STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)** held in the Room 14 - Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford, SG17 5TQ on Tuesday, 21 February 2017.

PRESENT

Jane Chipperton (Chairman)
Cllr Doreen Gurney (Vice-Chairman)

Group A:	Sister Aiden Richards	Roman Catholic Church Representative
	Tulsi Seva Dasi	Hindu Representative
	Tirath Singh	Sikh Representative
Group C:	Lucy Chapman	Lower School Representative, Sutton Lower School
	Carly Woodall	St Leonard's VA Lower School
	Kathleen Eldridge	Secondary RE Specialist, Redborne Upper School

Group D: Cllrs: F Firth, C G Gomm, Mrs D B Gurney and A Ryan

Apologies for	Cllrs:	Mrs A Barker
Absence:	Jo Ann Gaunt	Baptist Representative
	Anita Whitehurst	St Swithuns School

Substitutes: Cllrs M A G Versallion (In place of Mrs A Barker)

Officers in Attendance	Mr P Harpin	School Improvement Consultant
	Ms S Griffin	Committee Services Officer
	Miss M Brooks	Committee Services Officer

SACRE/16/1. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising.

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2016 be approved as a correct record subsequent to the following minor amendments:

Minute 16/2 Review of the Agreed Syllabus

Sentence to be amended to 'If the cost of the **current** review was over 2 years'

Minute 16/3 Understanding Christianity

Point 3 to be amended to 'The resource included core concepts and key questions and covered examples from other **denominations** such as Catholicism, Baptists and Methodism'

Minute 16/5 Draft GCSE and A Level results – 2016

As there was often disparity between provisional and final data, an update would be given to SACRE when the final data had been received and validated.

Minute 16/6 Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Comments

Point 1 to be amended to 'There had been 23 school inspections in Central Bedfordshire **during the previous academic year**'

Point 2 to be amended to 'All of the schools **reviewed at this meeting** had an overall grade of 'good' but there was still scope for improvement.'

SACRE/16/2. **Chairman's Update**

Members were advised of the following:

The Chairman of SACRE attended the Holocaust Memorial Day Event at Redborne Upper School which was a valuable and moving experience.

There was a vacancy for a Church of England representative as Reverend Anne Crawford had resigned from SACRE.

SACRE/16/3. **Review of the Agreed Syllabus**

The Chairman provided an update on the current status of the Review of the Agreed Syllabus.

Points and comments included:

1. A number of options were considered including keeping the old syllabus, commissioning an expert to review the Agreed Syllabus, working with other Local Authorities to produce a joint syllabus and purchasing an off the shelf version of the syllabus.
2. Consideration was given to replicating the approach taken by Hertfordshire County Council whose Syllabus consists of a separate legal document to the scheme of work. This was deemed not an appropriate approach to be adopted by Central Bedfordshire Council.
3. The diocese of St Albans has granted £10,000 to be used by Luton Borough, Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire to fund the review of the Agreed Syllabus. This means that each of the three parties will need to provide a smaller amount to secure enough funds for this review to take place.
4. RE Today could potentially be one of the providers.
5. A survey would be sent to all schools and Head teachers represented on the three SACREs to obtain feedback on the current Agreed Syllabus and identify areas for improvement.
6. The total funding required for the review is £18,000, with £10,000 being funded by the Diocese of St Albans.
7. The agreement with the provider will include the ability for SACRE to sell copies of the Agreed Syllabus plus extra units of work and to charge schools for attendance. Any revenue obtained to be divided amongst the three local authorities.
8. The previous Agreed Syllabus had a national status plus a local dimension element.
9. The Chairman confirmed that the Assistant Director for School Improvement has agreed to provide £3000 towards to the review of the Agreed Syllabus.

10. The Review process was currently at the procurement stage, with the outcome of the bids expected by the end of week commencing 27 February 2017.

RESOLVED

that an update on the Review of the Agreed Syllabus would be given when the procurement process had been concluded.

SACRE/16/4. GCSE and A Level results for 2016

The SACRE received an update on the finalised GCSE and A Level results for 2016 with information provided by the Data Team.

Key issues noted were:

1. The number of students taking GCSE RE had significantly decreased, with Cedars showing the most dramatic decrease. There is a possibility that this is due to course options but this would need to be investigated further.
2. Overall results 73% achieving A*-C in comparison to 76% in the previous year.
3. The number of students taking A Level RE is similar in comparison to last year but the overall results of students achieving A*- C has improved.
4. Number of students from Harlington completing GCSE RE is significantly higher than Redborne, however this could be due to the options available for students to take at each school.

Points and comments included:

- The general view was that the decline in student numbers completing a RE GCSE is due to the EBacc school performance measure where RE is not considered a humanity option.
- Concern was expressed about the relevance of what the current data is measuring, and whether a focus on measuring the number of time tabled hours spent teaching RE would be more appropriate.

RESOLVED

that the AS results will be obtained and provided to SACRE for accurate information.

SACRE/16/5. Development Plan

The SACRE considered a Development Plan setting out areas for development between April 2016-March 2017 and noted the following:

1. Positive feedback has been received from RE Subject Leaders on the Professional Studies group.
2. There is a need to review the sharing of information on different faiths and incorporate this into future meetings.
3. The Sikh representative provided positive feedback on the two schools which were visited recently and the RE lessons observed.

4. There were currently 10 schools with the RE Quality Mark, SACRE provide funding for schools to complete this application process.

Points and comments included:

- There was the need to develop a plan for the future, ensuring that there is funding available to review the Agreed Syllabus in 5 years time. This will be addressed in the coming months.
- The importance of the continuation of SACRE needed to be highlighted to the local authority.

RESOLVED

- 1. that members of SACRE would provide information to the Chairman of SACRE on items they wish to be included in the Annual SACRE report.**
- 2. that the Chairman of SACRE write to the Chairman of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny, CBC raising concerns about the continuation of SACRE due to budget constraints.**
- 3. that a questionnaire is sent out to CBC Upper Schools relating to their provision for RE to further inform the SACRE evaluation process.**

SACRE/16/6. RE Commission Survey

The Chairman provided an update on the RE Commission's call for evidence during which the following was noted:

1. The RE Commission website provides information on the commissioners.
2. Details of how evidence can be submitted and the deadline for submission can be found on the RE Commission website:

<http://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/commission-on-re/news/2017-02-06/commission-on-re-evidence-gathering-session>

The Chairman asked members to consider a number of questions from a 'Call for Evidence' from the RE Commission.

Feedback from The SACRE included:

- The scope and content of RE should provide students with historical facts and practice, allowing for a balance between time to discuss historical aspects and the time for students to reflect and consider further their views.
- A number of recent Ofsted reports have indicated that children do not have a strong understanding of the theoretical perspective of RE and how this impacts on the various religions.
- The current legal framework for RE should be overturned.
- Is the purpose of RE for enrichment or as a valued academic subject? If the latter the common baseline for RE should be the same as the

standard for Geography and History for example the same number of teaching hours.

RESOLVED

- 1. that members of SACRE would provide feedback on the Call for Evidence questions to the Chairman by 3 March 2017 for submission to the RE Commission for Central Bedfordshire SACRE.**
- 2. that a Commissioner from the RE Commission would be invited to a future meeting of SACRE to provide an update on the work currently being undertaken.**

SACRE/16/7. NASACRE Update Survey

The Chairman asked members to consider the questions posed in the NASACRE survey.

Feedback from The SACRE included:

- If there was a nationally Agreed Syllabus further clarification would be needed on what this would involve, and potential cost implications.
- The potential future role of SACRE would be a resource for schools supporting them with what a good RE provision should look like.
- The development of a local syllabus would be needed in addition to a national syllabus.
- Agreement was needed from the 3 SACREs regarding the provision of support for Collective Worship in schools.

RESOLVED

- 1. that members of SACRE would provide feedback on the NASACRE survey questions to the Chairman for collation and submission to NASACRE.**
- 2. that the future Development plan could include a focus on Collective Worship.**
- 3. that the next SACRE meeting would include an Agreed Syllabus conference.**

SACRE/16/8. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Comments.

The SACRE considered the Ofsted Spiritual, Moral and Cultural (SMSC) comments for September to December 2016 and noted the following:

1. There is an emerging issue that if a school receives a Short inspection from Ofsted, the feedback will take the form of a letter rather than a report.
2. There have been 10 inspections of schools during this period.
3. 6 of the 10 schools received an overall rating of good.

RESOLVED

that future Ofsted reports should be reviewed to highlight any mention of RE in addition to SMSC comments.

SACRE/16/9. Date of the next meeting.

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 4 July, 2:30pm, Priory House, Chicksands.

SACRE/16/10. Date for Subsequent Meeting.

Future meeting will be held on Tuesday 7 November 2017.
(Note: The meeting commenced at 2:00pm and concluded at 3:55pm)

Chairman

Dated