

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)** held in the Room 14 - Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford, SG17 5TQ on Tuesday, 8 November 2016.

### PRESENT

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

<b>Group A:</b>	Sister Aiden Richards	Roman Catholic Church Representative
	Mary O'Sullivan	Roman Catholic Church Representative
	Jo Ann Gaunt	Baptist Representative
	Tirath Bhavra	Sikh Representative
	Nina Leigh	Jewish Representative
<b>Group C:</b>	Lucy Chapman	Lower School Representative, Sutton
		Lower School
	Kathleen Eldridge	Secondary RE Specialist, Redborne
		Upper School
	Anita Whitehurst	St Swithuns School

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs Mrs A Barker  
C C Gomm

Substitutes: Cllrs M A G Versallion (In place of Mrs A Barker)  
N Warren (In place of C C Gomm)

Officers in Attendance Mr P Harpin School Improvement Consultant

Others in Attendance Mr M McMaster RE Today

### SACRE/16/1. Minutes of the Last Meeting

#### RESOLVED

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2016 be approved as a correct record subsequent to the following minor amendment:**

Minute L/04/55 Appointment of Vice Chairman

The sentence is to be amended to 'Cllr Doreen Gurney was duly appointed as **Vice Chairman** of the SACRE for the ensuing municipal year'.

### SACRE/16/2. Review of the Agreed Syllabus

Mr M. McMaster, Business Development Manager, RE Today gave an update on the review of the Agreed Syllabus during which the following was outlined:

1. A review of the draft Agreed Syllabus was needed in order for SACRE to meet its statutory responsibility.
2. The Agreed Syllabus was a considerable document which was unique in the sense of the legal agreement and activities. Due to the change of the Levels system to age related expectations, any refresh would affect the whole document.
3. Discussions were taking place with Luton Borough and Bedford Borough Councils to look at the options which included commissioning RE Today to produce a slimmed down version of the Agreed Syllabus with separate assessment units, replicating the approach taken by Hertfordshire County Council.
4. RE Today are one of the only professional organisations who write professional RE publications as RE advisers (who used to write the Agreed Syllabus) no longer exist in some counties.
5. RE Today had produced an 'off the shelf', loose leaf version of the Agreed Syllabus, the cost of which was slightly less than the bespoke version. This version was comprised of 70-80 pages of standard content which enabled individual pages and the contents page to be updated and local appendices to be added. Luton Borough Council had indicated their second option would be to adopt this version as it was a cost effective option whilst being sensitive to the local needs of school.
6. RE Today could be commissioned to hold a hard copy of the Agreed Syllabus which could be reprinted for revenue. The local authority could also print and sell the Agreed Syllabus in its own local authority area although it was not possible to guarantee a re-coup of cost of the review.
7. If the Agreed Syllabus was updated in partnership with Bedford Borough and Luton Borough Councils, the copyright would be a joint agreement with any revenue divided amongst the 3 local authorities and RE Today.

Points and comments included:

- Why was a tailor made syllabus needed if a functional version had already been produced by other local authorities?
- Feedback received from a large number of schools locally was that the Agreed Syllabus was one of the most important documents agreed by SACRE as it protected requirements locally.
- The 'off the self' version was very general whereas the scheme of working in the existing Agreed Syllabus was extremely detailed and included guidance about lesson planning. Using the 'off the shelf' version would be a step backwards for CBC as it has a strong local syllabus. Consistency across the local authority was needed.
- The Jewish element in the Agreed Syllabus needed to be accurate. The document also needed to cover and present all faiths in an appropriate way.
- There was a lack of funding available to undertake the review.
- If the Agreed Syllabus was a statutory duty, funding needed available carry out this duty.
- If the cost was over 2 years, would this be manageable in terms of the budget?

Members challenged the proposal significantly and expressed concern about the principle spend of £5,000. After a lengthy discussion it was felt that

clarification was needed about the amendments and additions required in order for a decision to be made about refreshing the Agreed Syllabus.

**RESOLVED**

- 1. To work with Luton Borough Council on the option of a locally Agreed Syllabus.**
- 2. The potential for recovery of costs would be explored where possible.**
- 3. An Agreed Syllabus conference is to be set up to discuss a work programme.**

**SACRE/16/3. Understanding Christianity**

The Chairman gave a presentation which outlined the following:

1. The Understanding Christianity Text Impact Connections resource was written by a team of RE advisors from RE Today Services, in collaboration with more than 30 expert teachers, advisers and academics.
2. The key purpose of the resource was to support pupils in developing their understanding of Christianity, as a contribution to their understanding of the world and their own experience within it.
3. The resource included core concepts and key questions and covered examples from other faiths such as Catholicism, Baptism and Methodism.
4. The resource had been piloted in over 50 schools across the country with the intention that this approach to teaching Religious Education would be used in other religions too.

**NOTED**

**The presentation entitled Understanding Christianity**

**SACRE/16/4. Draft Development Plan**

The SACRE considered a draft Development Plan setting out areas for development between April 2016 to March 2017.

**NOTED**

**Noted the Draft SACRE Development Plan for the period of April 2016 to March 2017**

**SACRE/16/5. Draft GCSE and A Level results - 2016**

The SACRE received an update on the draft GCSE and A Level results for 2016.

Key issues noted were:

- The number of students taking RE had dropped from 25% (1250 students in 2015 to 946 students in 2016). The reason for the reduction had not been identified. A possible reason could be the options available and the combination.
- A drop had also been seen in the GCSE full % Achieving A\* - C from 77 to 71,
- A level % Achieving A\* -C from 53 to 49 and AS Level % Achieve A\* -C from 57 to 44.

**RESOLVED**

**The confirmed results and the reason for any discrepancies would be presented at the next meeting.**

**SACRE/16/6. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Comments**

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

- There had been 23 inspections of schools in Bedfordshire
- All of the schools had an overall grade of 'good' but there was still scope for improvement.

**NOTED**

**The Ofsted Spiritual, Moral and Cultural (SMSC) comments for April to July 2016.**

**SACRE/16/7. Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 17 February 2017, 2pm, Priory House, Chicksands.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 2.00 p.m. and concluded at 3.55 p.m.)

Chairman .....

Dated .....