

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)** held at Council Chamber, Priory House, Chicksands, Shefford on Tuesday, 18 June 2013

PRESENT

Chairman –Mrs Jane Chipperton (elected at the meeting)

Vice-Chairman – Cllr Mrs Doreen Gurney (appointed at the meeting)

Group A	Sister Aidan Richards Mary O’Sullivan Tirath Singh Bhavra Nina Leigh Ven. Akurala Samitha	Roman Catholic Church representative Roman Catholic Church representative Sikh representative Jewish representative Buddhist representative
Group B	Jane Chipperton	Church of England
Group C	Anita Whitehurst Lucy Chapman Kathleen Eldridge Jacquie Binks	Headteacher, St Swithun’s VA Lower School Sutton VA Lower School Redbourne Upper School Etonbury Academy
Group D	Cllr Rita Drinkwater Cllr Roger Pepworth Cllr Mark Versallion	Member of Central Bedfordshire Council Member of Central Bedfordshire Council Member of Central Bedfordshire Council (acting as a substitute for Cllr C Gomm)
Officers in attendance	Paul Harpin Mel Peaston	School Intervention Manager and Virtual School Lead Committee Services Manager
Apologies for Absence:	Cllr Angela Barker Rev. Anne Crawford Cllr Charles Gomm Mr Mohsin Malik Mrs Marion Roberts Mrs C Spurgeon Mr Tom Waterworth	

L/04/67 **Election of Chairman**

Jane Chipperton was nominated, seconded, and duly elected as Chairman until the first meeting of the SACRE in 2014/15.

L/04/68 **Appointment of Vice- Chairman**

Cllr Doreen Gurney was nominated, seconded and duly appointed as Vice-Chairman until the first meeting of the SACRE in 2014/15.

L/04/69 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence are as set out above.

It was noted that Marion Roberts had resigned.

L/04/70 **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the last meeting be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment: Cllr Doreen Gurney and Jacquie Binks to be recorded as having sent their apologies for absence.

L/04/71 **SACRE Membership**

The SACRE recalled that the last meeting had been inquorate and reviewed the membership for the various membership groups.

It was noted that additional representation should be sought from sections of the local community to maintain full membership, as follows:

- Free Church
- Hindu
- Special schools

All the members present were asked to draw on any contacts they had to secure appropriate representation.

It was noted that Gypsies and Travellers were not currently listed among the representative groups. A suggestion was made that NASACRE be consulted on representation from these communities.

A question was raised as to the status of Academy representatives. This would be checked after the meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. that all members of the SACRE consult their contacts with a view to securing full representation of all groups on the SACRE;
2. that the Lead Officer consult with the Free Churches Group to seek their representation;
3. that the Lead Officer consult NASACRE on including representation from the Gypsy and Traveller communities;
4. that the Lead Officer check the status of Academy representatives.

L/04/72

NASACRE Feedback

The Chairman tabled notes which had been compiled by herself and the Hertfordshire SACRE representative following the NASACRE annual conference held on 23 May 2013 in Birmingham.

It was noted that the keynote speakers, Alan Brine HMI (national lead for Religious Education) and Dr Mark Chater (Director of Culham St Gabriel's) had spoken about the current position of RE in schools and the future of SACREs.

It was noted that RE matters were "locally determined" and therefore there would be no national review.

The NASACRE conference had concluded that it would be necessary for SACREs to develop some innovative thinking to respond to the challenges.

RESOLVED

1. to receive the notes of the NASACRE annual conference;
2. to note the conclusions of the conference.

L/04/73

SACRE Development Plan 2013-14

The SACRE received and considered the draft SACRE Development Plan April 2013/March 2014.

A suggestion was made that in addition to the proposals the SACRE should measure the take-up of RE at GCSE and 'A' Level on an annual basis.

The Lead Officer indicated that he would monitor take-up of the short RE course, which was not currently recognised within the formal examination framework.

Further to discussion, the SACRE concluded that it would be premature, until there were more Free Schools in Central Bedfordshire, to focus on RE delivery in Free Schools.

During a series of contributions by SACRE members on the Development Plan, the following points were made:

- A Professional Studies Group at Redbourne School had focused on RE but it was unclear whether this would be continuing. The Lead Officer undertook to establish the position.
- In view of the excellent RE work carried out in many schools, the SACRE concluded that it would be valuable to shine a light on the experience of the children and report it at SACRE meetings. Lucy Chapman offered to present an outline of the RE work in Sutton VA Lower School and Kathleen Eldridge offered the same on Redbourne Upper School.
- Nina Leigh offered to give a talk about Judaism at a future SACRE meeting; her offer was gladly accepted.
- Visits to places of interest: these could include a visit to a Sikh Gurudwara, offered by Tirath Singh Bhavra, and a visit to Sutton Lower School in view of its links with community groups.
- A reminder was given that a supply of RE resources was centrally available and a suggestion was made that an article on this be included in Central Essentials .
- Further to a discussion about the need for a Faith Directory the Lead Officer indicated that he would seek information on available data from the Teaching School.
- The RE Quality Mark: it was noted that this cost approximately £400 and that eight Central Bedfordshire schools had expressed an interest. SACRE members with experience of the process advised that it was a testing but valuable assessment, involving the whole school and its governors, and that the SACRE might wish to offer some financial contribution. It was considered that the RE Quality Mark merited full discussion at a future meeting.
- The main item for the next meeting would be the SACRE Annual Report. A creative approach was sought to make this a more compelling document, and SACRE members were asked to offer photographs of appropriate events.
- Holocaust Memorial Day : Further to debate, the SACRE concluded:
 - this was often seen as a civic event rather than a religious matter, and the SACRE should not lead the memorial activities
 - an approach should be made to seek Council support to mark the day.

RESOLVED

1. the Plan should be amended to include “ measure the take-up of RE at GCSE and ‘A’ Level” under the heading “annual”;
2. the Lead Officer to establish whether Redbourne School was continuing to host a Professional Studies Group for RE;
3. that Nina Leigh would give a talk about Judaism at the autumn meeting of the SACRE;
4. that Lucy Chapman would give a talk about RE work in Sutton VA Lower School at the spring meeting of the SACRE;
5. that a future meeting would showcase RE in a secondary school, the meeting possibly to be held at Redbourne School;
6. that a future meeting would consider visits by the SACRE to external organisations such as a Sikh Gurudwara and Sutton Lower School;
7. that the RE Quality Mark be an agenda item at a future meeting;
8. that an article be placed in Central Essentials on the availability of RE resources for schools’ use;
9. the Lead Officer would establish what information was available from the Teaching School on faith contacts;
10. that modest financial support be offered to the 8 schools which had expressed an interest in gaining the RE Quality Mark, from the SACRE budget held within the Council;
11. that a creative approach should be taken to the production of the SACRE Annual Report, including interesting and relevant photographs, possibly sourced through SACRE members;
12. an hour of the next meeting should be spent on considering the role of the SACRE;
13. to approve and adopt the SACRE Development Plan 2013-March 2014, subject to amendments to reflect the matters indicated above;
14. to thank the Lead Officer for all his work in preparing the Development Plan.

L/04/74

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Experiences - Ofsted Feedback

The Lead Officer provided a table of OFSTED comments in relation to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in schools.

It was noted that many of the comments were rather bland. The SACRE's encouragement for take-up of the RE Quality Mark would enable the "values" comments to be assessed in a context of increased vigour.

Comments were made that in the context of a general decline in the teaching of RE and its lack of presence in the OFSTED inspection scene, this SACRE could make use of its Development Plan and Annual Report to celebrate and promote a positive approach.

Cllr Versallion, the Council's Executive Member for Children's Services, indicated that he was willing to write to OFSTED enclosing a copy of the summary report and pointing out the lack of rigour in assessing spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in Central Bedfordshire schools.

RESOLVED:

- 1. to note the summary of OFSTED's comments;**
- 2. to note that Cllr Versallion, in his role as Executive Member for Children's Services, would write to OFSTED pointing out the lack of rigour in assessing spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in Central Bedfordshire schools.**

L/04/75

Dates of Future Meetings

RESOLVED:

To note the arrangements for future meetings as follows:

- Tuesday 22 October 2013, 2.00pm. Room 15 Priory House, Chicksands, Central Bedfordshire Council**
- Tuesday 22 January 2014, 2.00pm. Room 15 Priory House, Chicksands, Central Bedfordshire Council.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 2.00 p.m. and concluded at 3.40 p.m..)