

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)** held at Room 14, Priory House on Tuesday, 7 July 2015.

PRESENT

Group A	Mary Sullivan	Roman Catholic Church Representative
	Marion Roberts	Free Church Representative
	Mohsin Malik	Muslim Representative
	Nina Leigh	Jewish Representative
	Ven Akurala Samitha	Buddhist Representative
		Hindu Representative
		Sikh Representative
Group B:	Rev. Anne Crawford	Church of England Representative
Group C:	Lucy Chapman	Lower School Representative, Sutton Lower School
	Kathleen Eldridge	Secondary RE Specialist, Redborne Upper School
	Jacquie Binks	Middle Schools Rep, Etonbury Middle School
	Janet Day	Special School Rep, Weatherfield Special School
	Anita Whitehurst	St Swithuns School

Group D: Cllrs: Mrs A Barker, F Firth and Mrs D B Gurney

Apologies for Absence: **Group A** Sister Aiden Richards
Group B Jane Chipperton, Tom Waterworth
Group C
Group D Cllr C Gomm and Cllr A Ryan

Substitutes: **Group A** None
Group B None
Group C None
Group D Cllr MAG Versallion in place of Cllr C Gomm
Cllr T Swain in place of Cllr A Ryan

Officers in Attendance: Mr P Harpin – School Improvement Consultant
Ms M Peaston – Committee Services Manager

SACRE/15/27. **Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman**

Having secured her agreement in advance of the meeting, Jane Chipperton was proposed and seconded in her absence for the position of Chairman.

RESOLVED to elect Jane Chipperton as Chairman for the remainder of the 2015/16 municipal year.

Cllr Doreen Gurney was proposed and seconded for the position of Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED to elect Cllr Doreen Gurney as Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the 2015/16 municipal year.

Cllr Gurney took the Chair for the meeting in the Chairman's absence. She welcomed the new members of the SACRE and visitors to the meeting.

SACRE/15/28. **Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2015 were approved as a correct record subject to an amendment in minute 14/19 to replace the name Nina Leigh with the name Jackie Binks (as the representative of Etonbury School who had made a presentation at the meeting). The minutes were then signed by the Chairman of the meeting.

SACRE/15/29. **SACRE Membership Update, Including Faith Groups**

The School Improvement Consultant, Paul Harpin, reported action which he and Jane Chipperton had undertaken following the last meeting to establish the reasons that some representatives in Group A had not recently attended meetings. Mr Harpin advised that Tirath Bhavra had been suffering some severe health issues and had therefore been unable to attend. The meeting commented on the valuable contribution that Mr Bhavra had made at earlier meetings. Mr Bhavra, who had not been present at the beginning of the meeting, arrived at that point and was warmly welcomed.

RESOLVED to note that further action would be taken by Paul Harpin to encourage Muslim and Buddhist attendance or replacement representation.

SACRE/15/30. **The RE Professional Study Group**

Lucy Chapman, Lower School representative (Sutton Lower School) stated that the Professional Study Group's (PSG's) aims were:

- To share good practice with RE colleagues
- To make suggestions for RE resources for teachers to use
- To share updates in RE.

The SACRE discussed various issues about PSGs within education including:

- PSGs used by lower and middle schools compared to upper schools. A comment was made that there was a current lack of PSG presence in upper schools which was a concern shared by the SACRE
- The very positive response and feedback presented by Lucy Chapman from schools which have an active PSG
- Suggestions about how schools such as Redborne Upper School can help non-specialist teachers of RE
- That colleagues within a PSG can share practice, give support and make suggestions on visits, visitors and resources for RE.

The discussion concluded:

- that the PSG feedback presented by Lucy Chapman indicated the high quality of this group's work
- the expertise and energy in the group were motivating, in particular in the context of the difficulties in recruiting specialist RE teachers
- practical points shared at meetings were most helpful.

The Chairman thanked Lucy Chapman for her presentation.

SACRE/15/31. New Draft Development Plan 2015-2016

The SACRE reviewed the Draft Development Plan for April 2015-March 2016. The need to consider the capacity and the resources of the Standing Advisory Council to undertake the programme of work was taken into account. The proposed focus at each of the meetings through the year was supported.

In response to a question, it was noted that Van Dyke Upper School had taken the decision not to offer RE GCSE not because of a lack of resources or support, but for other reasons. It was therefore acknowledged that the SACRE was unable to impact on the school's lack of interest in this area.

A discussion ensued on the SACRE's ability to influence the teaching of RE in schools. It was noted that some excellent work was being carried out in Lower and Middle Schools but that this tended to level off in some Upper Schools, including Academies. Although there was a statutory duty to devote a minimum of 5% of the curriculum to RE the SACRE had no powers to enforce this. The importance of supporting school Heads of Department with the RE remit through for example the RE Professional Study Group was acknowledged.

The School Improvement Consultant reassured new SACRE members that RE teaching had evolved to become inclusive and comprehensive.

A proposal was made to add to the Development Plan a task on establishing how schools were using RE lessons.

A suggestion was also made that plans be prepared for a visit to a school by the SACRE membership.

Note: Subsequent to the meeting an invitation was issued to the SACRE to visit Redborne Upper School, and arrangements would be made accordingly.

RESOLVED that the proposed Development Plan be approved, subject to the addition of a new focus item as follows:

Focus	Time scale	Outcome measure	Update
Investigate how schools are using their RE lessons	By the end of the summer term 2016	To enable a programme of support to be developed as appropriate	Spring Term 2016/17

In view of comments made by Tirath Bhavra about the Faith Tour involving 3000 young people, he was asked to report further on this at the next meeting.

Mr Bhavra also commented that it was now 70 years since the atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima leaving a legacy of destruction and devastated lives. He considered that it would be appropriate for the SACRE to consider issues in relation to the even greater power of modern weapons and therefore the need to encourage actions at every level to build peace in the world.

RESOLVED to add the following items to the agenda for the next meeting:

- A report from Tirath Bhavra on the Faith Tour
- Consideration of issues in light of the power of modern weapons and the need to strive for peace.

SACRE/15/32. "Take a Stand" Feedback

The School Improvement Consultant, Paul Harpin, reported on the "Take a Stand" exhibition which the SACRE had agreed to support through a donation of £400 in view of the benefits it would bring to the host school (Henlow Church of England Academy) and other schools in the area.

Mr Harpin's visit fortuitously happened to coincide with an OFSTED inspection and the inspectors welcomed the quality assurance provided by a SACRE representative.

The exhibition, which was staged in the library, focused on people who had championed the cause of civil liberties including Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi and Anne Frank. A reflections board placed at the end of the exhibition enabled students to make comments, which demonstrated some of the insights that students had arrived at through the exhibition.

The exhibition was thought provoking and the comments demonstrated that the students had been receptive to the messages. High quality resources were used, and it was well-managed. Mr Harpin concluded that this was an initiative

which the SACRE could feel proud to have supported and provided an example of how the SACRE could contribute to increasing the perceived value of RE and citizenship.

RESOLVED to note the report.

SACRE/15/33.Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Comments from Ofsted

The SACRE received its regular update on OFSTED evaluations for understanding of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural values in schools.

It was noted that only seven OFSTED inspections had been carried out during the period. Of these, five had received a grading of “good”, one had been graded “requires improvement” and one Middle school Academy had received a grading of “serious weaknesses”, although comments indicated that a range of extra-curricular activities as well as the assemblies programme help students to learn about other cultures and develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

RESOLVED to note the report.

SACRE/15/34.Feedback from NASACRE

As Jane Chipperton was unable to attend today’s meeting Paul Harpin reminded SACRE members that an email link to a document considered by the NASACRE had been forwarded to everyone in advance of this meeting. Although the document was 66 pages long it provided interesting reading, and the recommendations in particular would be the subject of an item at the next meeting.

RESOLVED that the recommendations contained in the document would be the main focus of the next meeting.

SACRE/15/35.National Updates

In view of Jane Chipperton’s absence, the update would be provided at the next meeting.

SACRE/15/36.Date of the next meeting

The SACRE noted that the next meeting would be held on 3 November 2015 at 2.00pm.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 2.00 p.m. and concluded at 3.00 p.m.)

Chairman

Date