

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SACRE (STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)** held at Room 15 - Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford, SG17 5TQ on Thursday, 8 November 2018.

### PRESENT

Mrs D B Gurney (Chairman)

<b>Group A:</b>	Tulsi Seva Dasi	Hindu Representative
<b>Group B:</b>	Father Diego Galanzino Ryan Parker	Church of England Representative Church of England Representative
<b>Group C:</b>	Kathleen Eldridge	Secondary RE specialist, Redborne Upper School
<b>Group D:</b>	Cllrs Mrs D B Gurney, F Firth, A Ryan, and M A G Versallion	
<b>Officers in Attendance:</b>	Mr Lat Blaylock	– RE Today
	Miss Maria Brooks	- Committee Services Officer, CBC
	Mr Paul Harpin	- School Improvement Consultant, CBC
	Mr Chris Kiernan	- Interim Head of School Improvement, CBC

### SACRE/18/11. Apologies

Apologise for absence were received from:

Group A	Sister Aiden Richards Tirath Bhavra Nina Leigh
Group B	Carly Woodall
Group C	Lucy Chapman Jacqui Binks Anita Whitehurst
Group D	Cllr Mrs A Barker Cllr N Warren

### SACRE/18/12. Introductions

Members were invited by the Chairman of SACRE to introduce themselves to new members of SACRE.

## SACRE/18/13.Minutes of the Last Meeting

### **RESOLVED**

**that the minutes of the meeting held on the 5 July 2018 be approved as a correct record.**

## SACRE/18/14.Election of Vice-Chairperson 2018/19

Nominations for Vice-Chairman of the SACRE were sought. Lucy Chapman a Lower School Representative from Sutton Lower School was nominated, seconded and duly elected.

### **RESOLVED**

**that Lucy Chapman be elected as Vice-Chairman of the SACRE for 2018/19.**

## SACRE/18/15.A Focus Upon Hinduism

The SACRE received a presentation from the Hindu representative on 'A Focus Upon Hinduism'.

The presentation provided SACRE with an overview of the Hindu faith and offered members with the opportunity to gain further knowledge and experience of a different faith.

Points and comments included:

- Members acknowledged that one of the duties of SACRE is to promote opportunities for schools to increase the exposure of children to different faiths and religions,.
- The SACRE acknowledged that teachers have received push back from parents concerning visits to other places of worship.
- Members noted that the Agreed Syllabus does recognise a parents right of withdrawal.
- The Interim Head of School Improvement confirmed that Central Bedfordshire Council have not previously monitored RE withdrawal.
- The SACRE acknowledged obtaining intelligence on the nature and level of incidence of RE withdrawal would allow members to assess what might be done to improve religious intolerance.

### **RESOLVED**

- 1. that the presentation on 'A Focus Upon Hinduism' be noted and;**
- 2. that data is collected by School Improvement Advisers within CBC and reported to SACRE on the incidence of parents refusing to allow their children to attend visits to mosques or temples or**

**withdrawing their child from all or part of the RE syllabus within Central Bedfordshire.**

**SACRE/18/16.Review of the Agreed Syllabus**

Members of SACRE agreed to discuss this item under Agenda item 7, see below for further information.

**SACRE/18/17.Evaluation of the Launch of the Agreed Syllabus.**

The representative from RE Today provided an evaluation of the launch of the Agreed Syllabus, an update on the training programme to come and consideration of the budget and work for the coming year.

Key issues noted were:

1. 127 people attended the September launch day and 105 attended the October launch day at Putteridge Bury Conference centre.
2. At the launch day Teachers received a day of training on how to implement the new Agreed Syllabus.
3. These events were rated good, or very good by 98% of attendees.
4. The first two teacher network sessions took place on the 8 November with 9 teachers from Secondary schools and 22 teachers from Primary schools attending. Initial feedback again was positive.
5. There are currently 9 teaching plans written for the Agreed Syllabus, over the coming months there could be a focus to finish the remaining plans.
6. There are a number of articles on the NATRE website which relate to the business of SACRE in particular the guidance for Headteachers on the right of parents to withdraw their child from RE education.
7. The Agreed Syllabus is being shared with Central Bedfordshire Teachers via Perspective Lite which is an IT system that allows confidential information to be shared with schools.
8. Training events to assist with the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus have been organised, including 'Understanding Christianity' and training on 'Three Religions' providing support on subject knowledge in relation to Jewish, Hindu and Islamic life.

[Note: Mr Ryan Parker joined the meeting]

Points and comments included:

- The SACRE acknowledged that the Teacher network meetings were a fantastic provision of INSET training on the Agreed Syllabus for Central Bedfordshire Teachers and should be replicated for February and July 2019.
- The SACRE noted that money had been made available to cover the calculated expenditure of SACRE over the coming months.
- The Interim Head of School Improvement confirmed that a budget of £12,000 would be made available to SACRE to utilise over the coming financial years.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. that the National News for SACRE, Autumn 2018 be noted and;**
- 2. that the training dates for implementing the Agreed Syllabus be provided to SACRE members.**  
**[Note:- Subsequent to the meeting the following training dates were provided.**  
**27 February: Learning three religions: Hindu, Muslim and Jewish**  
**15 January, 3 April and ½ day 4 July: Understanding Christianity in Bedford / Luton.**  
**Both are expected to take place at Marston Moretaine]**
- 3. that Officers provide SACRE with an annual budget report for analysis.**

## **SACRE/18/18.SACRE Development Plan 2018-19**

The SACRE considered a Draft Development Plan setting out areas for development between April 2018 – March 2019 and noted the following:

1. The roll out and training for the Agreed Syllabus is the next phase and more detailed plans on the way in which the schools will be engaged in implementing the new Agreed Syllabus will emerge.
2. The annual review of the final GCSE and A Level results will be available at the February 2019 meeting of the SACRE.
3. That Mr Ryan Parker is still the link for the Professional Studies Group and will be able to provide updates to SACRE at subsequent meetings.
4. There are currently 12 schools with the RE Quality mark and work continues on supporting schools who choose to engage in the pursuit of REQM.
5. The Annual SACRE report will be compiled next term.

Points and comments included:

- Members of SACRE expressed a wish to visit schools in Central Bedfordshire to observe RE lessons.
- The SACRE noted that the supporting holocaust day will be taking place on the 27 January 2019 and the theme will be reflecting on the trauma of families losing a safe place to call home.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. that the development plan be noted; and**
- 2. that the School Improvement Consultant investigate opportunities for the SACRE to visit schools in Central Bedfordshire to observe RE lessons.**
- 3. that a representative from SACRE attends the NASACRE AGM due to take place in the summer term 2019.**

## SACRE/18/19. **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC)**

The SACRE considered the Ofsted Spiritual, Moral and Cultural comments (SMSC) for April – July 2018 and noted the following:

1. There have been 5 inspections of schools during this period.
2. Ardley Hill, Dunstable school's report highlighted that the pupils have developed their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well through the curriculum.
3. Brooklands, Middle school's report highlighted that pupils are encouraged to consider issues such as moral guidance, racism in society and tolerance which prepares them well for modern Britain.

Points and comments included:

- The SACRE Council noted that Stratton Upper School has been recognised for its work in Holocaust education.

### **NOTED**

**the report**

## SACRE/18/20. **The SACRE Constitution**

The SACRE reviewed the 2010 version of the SACRE constitution.

Points and comments included:

- The SACRE acknowledged that the Council were fulfilling their duty to advise on matters concerned with school worship through the provision of teacher network meetings, INSET.
- The SACRE noted that if a member is absent for 3 or more consecutive meetings for any reason not acceptable to the Council there shall be deemed to be a vacated place to be filled.
- The Council agreed that the appointment of teacher association representatives should be looked at when a vacancy emerges.
- The SACRE noted that the Teacher Network meetings for Primary and Secondary Teachers would take place prior to the SACRE meetings.

### **RESOLVED**

- 1. that the SACRE Constitution be noted and;**
- 2. that the School Improvement Consultant place a notice in Central Essentials for the appointment to the vacant place on the SACRE for the Teachers' association representatives.**
- 3. that the School Improvement Consultant contact the teacher representatives to identify if there any issues with attendance due to the revised start time of the SACRE.**

**SACRE/18/21.Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting would be held on Thursday 28 February 2019, 4:00pm, Priory House, Chicksands.

**SACRE/18/22.Future Meeting Dates**

Future meeting will be held on Tuesday 2 July 2019, 4:00pm at Priory House.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 4.05 p.m. and concluded at 5.20 p.m.)

Chairman .....

Dated .....

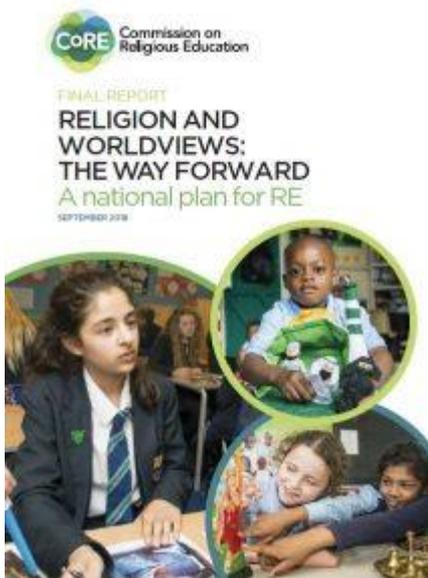
## National News for SACRE, Autumn 2018

**The New RE Syllabus for Central Bedfordshire, Bedford Borough and Luton has been successfully launched.**

We ran two very popular launch events for the new syllabus in September (attendance 127) and October (attendance 105) at Putteridgebury Conference Centre. These events were rated good or very good by 98% of attendees. They enabled us to explain in depth and detail the requirements, resources and opportunities of the new syllabus and to provide inspiration and enthuse teachers, mostly subject leaders but many senior school leaders too, to pursue the task of implementing the syllabus.

We announced a further training programme for schools including the training for 'Understanding Christianity' and a day of training on 'Three Religions' enabling us to support the need for subject knowledge in relation to Jewish, Hindu and Islamic life.

**The Commission on RE: final report, launched September 18.**



This independent report, funded and supported by the RE Council, has spent over a year developing its perspective and recommendations, and has been observed (keenly?) by DfE and government. SACREs are very interested in its conclusions, not least because it has considered questions about local determination of RE and Agreed Syllabuses, recommending a new national entitlement for RE, and the removal of the responsibility on SACREs to make Agreed Syllabuses, the renaming of SACREs and the reduction of their responsibilities. There are 11 recommendations to consider and the thrust of the report is to move control of the RE curriculum from SACREs to a new national body, appointed and paid for by the DfE, supported by the RE Council. Reception of the report has varied from enthusiasm to more cautious voices, e.g. from NASACRE, the BDBJ and the CES.

### Funding from Government for SACRE

SACREs will be funded through the central school services block (CSSB) from 2018-19, which is one of the blocks of funding in the national funding formula. For further information, see the [NFF Policy Document](#) and the [2018-19 Operational Guidance](#) (specifically paragraph 133).

### 'A new settlement revised: Religion and Belief in schools'

A recent report by Professor Linda Woodhead and former Education Secretary Charles Clarke suggests that our more diverse society makes reform to current legislation even more overdue. At the launch Stephen Timms MP welcomed everyone and reflected that we are all shaped by our experience of religion at school, legislation that was set in this place, Parliament, in 1944. Professor Woodhead introduced the report she noted that when the 1944 act was first read in 1943 the country was at war but education was still considered to be important. She explained the morphing of the subject from RI to the official renaming in 1988 of Religious Education. She characterised RE as learning about others and suggested in 2018 it is time to learn about us in the diverse context we live in. She said, '...change is overdue RE like any other academic subject needs no longer to be exceptionalised and parents should no longer be allowed to withdraw pupils from RE. Other recommendations in the report are around collective worship and 'faith schools'.

## RE Teacher recruitment

This has been a particularly challenging year for teacher recruitment and especially so for RE. After missing the target for recruitment for training of teachers of RE to begin in 2017, the DfE failed to take an action to incentivise recruitment for 2018. In contrast, bursaries were increased or maintained at a higher level for those choosing to train in other subjects. These higher level bursaries are offered for many subjects including subjects who had been more successful in recruiting 2017. We should not be surprised therefore, that at the time of writing, of all secondary subjects, RE the fourth worst level of recruitment at just over 50% of the target. This picture will – we hope – change after the recent announcement from DfE that new entrants will, this year, attract a £9 000 bursary as they become RE Teachers. A little, and rather late, but something to be pleased about.

## Youth Debate: England's young people challenge MPs at Westminster

On Monday 9th July 2018, 80 Year 10-12 students from schools across England came to Parliament to debate some of the key issues around the teaching of Religious Education (RE). The students discussed some of the fundamental issues facing the subject, such as whether, in an increasingly secular society, RE is still a vital component of balanced, modern curriculum, and whether pupils learn more by studying other people's belief than your one.

Numerous MPs, Parliamentary researchers, policy advisers and other interested parties witnessed the debate, which showcased the students' engagement with the subject through their range and depth of thinking around these complex questions.

Students were welcomed to Westminster by William Wragg MP, Liz Twist MP, and historian of religion and broadcaster, Professor Francesca Stavrakopoulou.

In a wide-ranging discussion – covering topics as diverse as the role of religious literacy in combatting extremism, the need for RE in an increasingly secular society, and whether or not students learn more by studying their own religion and belief than they do by studying their own – United Nations debating rules were firmly applied in the chamber by the co-chairs, students from Mulberry School for Girls in Hackney, London. Both young women were clearly and expertly trained in handling opinionated peers... and politicians!

Professor Francesca said, "The level of debate was extremely impressive - the pupils were bright, passionate and rigorous in their arguments'.

## NATRE's Strictly RE: bigger and even better for 2019: should SACRE sponsor some local delegates?

Bookings are open now for the national annual NATRE conference in London on January 26<sup>th</sup>. Subscribers to RE Today may be eligible for discounts on their fees to Strictly – check the website for details. The conference brings together about 250 people in the largest gathering of RE professionals in the year. If you have never been, or if you've come each year, then plan to join us for an inspirational and exciting day of lectures, seminars, exhibits, connections and opportunities: all the exam awarding bodies and major publishers will be there too.

## **New teachers of RE getting together: NATRE's regional 'Welcome to RE' conferences. Can SACRE support new RE teachers this year?**

NATRE's Inter-University conferences for new teachers ran last year in Belfast, Exeter, Swansea, York, Ormskirk and London. We love to bring together the new entrants to secondary RE teaching from different universities, Teach First, SCITT and other routes: we have over twenty ITE partners who send their graduates along to these events. Over 200 new teachers of RE attended one of the events, which are generously sponsored by the Jerusalem Trust, and their continuing support means that a similar set of conferences can be run next year. Already, these are planned for Leeds (7<sup>th</sup> December), Edge Hill (14<sup>th</sup> December) and London (8<sup>th</sup> February 2019). The program will enable new RE teachers to learn about the national politics of RE but also to engage with some of NATRE's lesson and learning ideas in highly practical ways. For more details email the conference organiser Lat Blaylock: [lat@retoday.org.uk](mailto:lat@retoday.org.uk).

## **Free copies of Christian scripture for your pupils?**

The Gideons, the Christian charity famous for giving Bibles away to hotels – and pretty much anyone who wants one – are happy to come to any secondary school in the UK, and volunteers, who are professional and business people, can take an assembly or an RE lesson to make the offer of a free copy of the New Testament and Psalms. They have 7 new assemblies and seven new lessons to share, and about 1000 volunteers have taken part in a day's training recently to enable them to deliver the assemblies and lessons. For further information, contact Tony Lovering on [HQ@gideons.org.uk](mailto:HQ@gideons.org.uk)

## **NATRE's New2RE project: mentoring, support and conferences for those starting teaching secondary RE**

NATRE runs a funded programme called 'new2RE' for those who are secondary NQTs, over the first three years of their careers. A small number of places may still be available: does SACRE know any new teachers in secondary RE who it could refer to this programme, rated excellent by a big majority of its participants every year.

## **BBC's recent and new RE programming: can SACRE draw attention to these programmes for schools?**

The well-loved BBC Bitesize site has a major review and renewal underway, with 10 new KS4 programmes nearly ready to use, and major innovations around the new GCSE for 14-16s. These 'A day in the faith of...' clips will present the lives of young members of the 6 principal religions, as they talk about some of the key ideas and concepts of GCSE and Scottish RE

Now broadcast and available free via BBC Teach (all these have notes written by RE Today to accompany them):

- For 5-7s, 10 animated short films of key stories of faith from 6 different religions, series title: 'Religions of the World'.
- My Life, My Religion 5 x 30 minute programmes. Featuring lots of original filming from across Britain using child presenters with diariycams, one each on being Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu and Sikh in today's Britain. Online as clips in segments of 2-4 minutes.
- For 11-14s, 'An A-Z of Religion' with notes for students to use the 26 programmes from RE Today (written as supported self study materials for homework).

- For 14-16s, A Question of Faith 5 x 12 minute programmes for GCSE and Standard Grade in 2014 on sexuality, marriage, death, revelation and suffering, with notes on RE Today and clips on BBC Bitesize.

A new series of ten further GCSE / 14-16 programmes and a complete revision of the Bitesize offer to schools is in process, using the idea of ‘a day in the life’ of people from different religions as a hook. I’m enjoying working as series consultant for this.

Lat Blaylock, National RE Adviser, Autumn 2018

### **Additional material from NATRE:**

#### **Relevant documents on our NATRE website relating to SACREs**

1. [30+ things a SACRE can do](#)
2. [Exemplar SACRE letter RE provision in LA maintained schools](#)
3. [Exemplar SACRE letter RE provision in academies](#)
4. [Funding for SACREs 2017-18](#)
5. [Exemplar SACRE follow up letter about RE provision](#)
6. [How to make a complaint about the RE curriculum in a local authority maintained school](#)