

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, 28 February 2019.

PRESENT

Cllr Mrs D B Gurney (Chairman)
Lucy Chapman (Vice-Chairman)

- Group A:** Tulsi Seva Dasi Hindu Representative
Tirath Bhavra Sikh Representative
- Group B:** Ryan Parker Church of England Representative
- Group C:** Lucy Chapman Lower School Representative, Sutton Lower School
Kathleen Eldridge Secondary RE Specialist, Redborne Upper School
- Group D:** Cllrs Mrs D B Gurney, R Firth, A Ryan and N Warren

Officers in

Attendance: Mr Lat Blaylock – RE Today
Miss M Brooks - Committee Services Officer, CBC
Mr Paul Harpin - School Improvement Consultant, CBC
Mr Chris Kiernan - Interim Head of School Improvement, CBC

SACRE/18/23. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Group A Sister Aiden Richards
Nina Leigh
- Group B Father Diego Galanzino
Carly Woodall
- Group C Jacqui Binks
Anita Whitehurst
- Group D Cllr Mrs A Barker

SACRE/18/24. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2018 be approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising/ Actions from SACRE

SACRE/18/17 – Evaluation of the Launch of the Agreed Syllabus

It was noted that the Agreed Syllabus is being shared with Central Bedfordshire Schools and that the second session of Teacher network meetings have taken place. Both sessions received very positive feedback.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the Chairman of SACRE provide an update to the next full Council meeting on the work of SACRE.**

SACRE/18/20 – The SACRE Constitution

Members of SACRE were informed that Anita Whitehurst a Lower School Representative from St Swithuns School had resigned as a member of SACRE.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the Committee Services Officer inform the School Improvement Consultant of the correct process for appointing to the vacant place on the SACRE for the Teacher's association representatives.**
- 2. that following the correct process SACRE appoint a new Teacher's association representative to SACRE.**

SACRE/18/25.SACRE Updates Spring 2019

The representative from RE Today provided SACRE with updates for spring 2019.

Key issues noted were:

1. The response from the Secretary of State for Education on the Commission on RE's proposals was disappointing.
2. SACRE welcomed the funding for subject knowledge enhancement courses and the increase in bursary provision for people to train to become RE teachers, but noted that the bursary provision does not yet match that of other shortage subjects.
3. Reference was made to the new BBC programmes for KS3 RE and extensive information for students studying GCSE on BBC bitesize.
4. Nick Gibb reinforced that RE is a compulsory subject to teach and the importance of the DfE reinforcing this with Academies.
5. The OFSTED draft inspection framework was noted particularly as the new framework provides a clear focus on a broad and balanced

curriculum and highlights that all pupils in maintained schools are expected to study the national curriculum, religious education and age appropriate sex education.

6. The regional ambassador for Religious Education for South Central is a Central Bedfordshire Teacher and she will be responsible for co-ordinating local RE structures.

Points and comments included:

- That members of SACRE wish to give thanks and highlight the achievement of Sarah Payne who will be the regional ambassador for Religious Education for South Central.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the SACRE Updates for Spring 2019 from RE Today Services be noted and;**
- 2. that the draft response from Bedford Borough SACRE on the response from the secretary of state for Education on the Commission on RE's proposal be circulated to all SACRE members.**
- 3. that SACRE collate a response following on from the secretary of state for Education's response on the Commission on RE's proposal.**
- 4. that the Chairman of SACRE provide a report to full Council on the work of SACRE over the last academic year.**
- 5. that SACRE provide a consultation response on the OFSTED draft inspection framework.**

SACRE/18/26.Review of SACRE Development Plan

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

1. Engagement with schools in implementing the new Agreed Syllabus is underway with the second network meeting with Primary and Secondary schools already having taken place and third scheduled for July 2019.
2. Professional Study sessions took place in the Autumn term with a further one planned for the summer term.
3. There are currently 12 schools with the RE Quality mark with a further two who have expressed an interest in obtaining this in the future and one school who is looking to enhance this.
4. The Annual SACRE report will be compiled and will include an opening letter from the previous Chairman of SACRE.
5. The NASACRE AGM will be taking place on the 22 May 2019 in Manchester.

Points and comments included:

- Members of SACRE noted that there will be a new Head of School Improvement appointed in March 2019, and they will continue to provide support and attend all future meetings of SACRE.
- The SACRE emphasised the need to continue to offer the Teacher Network meetings and highlighted their importance in providing support to schools within Central Bedfordshire with the implementation of the new Agreed Syllabus.
- A member of the council requested visibility of the SACRE budget with actual and projected spend.
- The SACRE noted that with the possible change in the OFSTED inspection framework more schools may see the value in obtaining the RE quality mark.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the development plan be noted; and**
- 2. that Officers provide SACRE with ongoing updates on spend from the budget.**
- 3. that the new Head of School Improvement be invited to attend all future meets of SACRE.**
- 4. that the contract with RE Today continue for another year and Teacher Network sessions are arranged for the next academic year.**
- 5. that a representative from SACRE attends the NASACRE AGM in May 2019.**

SACRE/18/27.Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Comments from Ofsted Reports

The SACRE considered Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural comments (SMSC) for September – December 2018 and noted the following:

1. There were five inspections during this period, all of which were short inspections of one day per school.
2. Four of the schools inspected had no specific comments in relation to SMSC and RE.
3. Sundon Lower school's report highlighted the 'faith tour' in Bedford.

Points and comments included:

- The SACRE noted that the overall grade for Moggerhanger Primary school should have been 2 rather than 1.
- The new OFSTED inspection framework may result in more detailed comments in relation to RE being included in the reports.

NOTED

the report.

SACRE/18/28.RE GCSE and A Level Results 2018

The SACRE reviewed the KS4 and KS5 results for 2018 in Religious Studies and noted the following:

1. In KS4 the number of students studying Religious Studies has dropped significantly with 578 students entered for exams in 2018 compared to 831 in the previous year.
2. Overall the results in KS4 have improved marginally.
3. For KS5 A-Level the number of students entered are small with only 49 students achieving A*-C which has decreased in comparison to the previous year.
4. For AS Level 24 students achieved A*-C.

Points and comments included:

- The SACRE noted that the decrease in those students studying Religious Studies fits the national trend and could be due to the change in curriculum for the subject.
- AS Level is now a two year course but includes half the content of the A Level and is worth half the ACAS points.
- Some Upper schools have reduced the number of A Levels from four to three which could be attributing the decrease in those students wishing to study Religious Education.
- The interim Head of School Improvement confirmed to the Council that there had been three cases recently of parents refusing to allow their children to attend visits to mosques or temples.
- There have been less incidents of parents exercising their right to withdraw their child from all or part of the RE Syllabus within Central Bedfordshire.
- The SACRE noted that the recruitment of RE teachers is particularly challenging at just over 50% of the target. However, there is hope that the new bursary will attract new entrants.
- The Teacher network meetings are assisting those teachers in Central Bedfordshire who are not specialists in RE use the Agreed Syllabus although there is an expectation that teachers will still need to do some research.
- The SACRE acknowledged that nine complete planned units were written for the launch of the new Agreed Syllabus, but teachers are requesting more.
- An agreement between the three local authorities to complete more planned units in the Agreed Syllabus should be looked at further.
- The council noted that a plan is needed for mixed aged classes which is a particular issue for rural schools within Central Bedfordshire.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the KS4 and KS5 results for 2018 be noted and;**
- 2. that the School Improvement Consultant provide an update on the feedback received on the Teacher network meetings at the next SACRE meeting.**

3. that the three local authority SACREs look at collectively commissioning the completion of more planned units within the Agreed Syllabus.
4. that more information is obtained on what information is required in the Agreed Syllabus to assist with mixed aged teaching to allow for a supplement to be added to the existing document.

SACRE/18/29.Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 2 July 2019, 4:00pm, Priory House, Chicksands.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 4.00 p.m. and concluded at 5.10 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated