

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SACRE (STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)** held at Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford, SG17 5TQ on Thursday, 9 November 2017.

### PRESENT

J Chipperton (Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs D B Gurney (Vice-Chairman)

<b>Group A:</b>	Sister Aiden Richards Mary O'Sullivan Tulsi Seva Dasi	Roman Catholic Church Representative Roman Catholic Church Representative Hindu Representative
<b>Group B:</b>	Father Diego Galanzino	Church of England Representative
<b>Group C:</b>	Lucy Chapman Kathleen Eldridge	Lower School Representative, Sutton Lower School Secondary RE Specialist, Redborne Upper School
<b>Group D:</b>	Cllrs Mrs A Barker, F Firth and C C Gomm	
<b>Officers in Attendance:</b>	Miss M Brooks Mr P Harpin	– Committee Services Officer - School Improvement Consultant

### SACRE/17/1. Minutes of the Last Meeting

#### RESOLVED

**that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2017 be approved as a correct record subsequent to the following minor amendments:**

Minute 17/3 Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Comments  
Point 2 to be amended to 'Ridgmont Lower School, has also received positive comments.'

Resolved point 2 to be amended to 'that Mr Harpin provide a list of **Religious Secondary Coordinators** in Central Bedfordshire schools to the SACRE, if this information was not available then a questionnaire be sent to the schools asking them for details of their worship or spiritual co-ordinator. This would be carried out in the Autumn term.'

## SACRE/17/2. **Chairman's Update**

Members were advised of the following:

The group were asked to welcome a new member representing the Church of England, Father Diego. Father Diego Galanzino is currently the Parish Priest for All Saints, Houghton Regis.

Central Bedfordshire Council have advertising for new positions within School Improvement. Once appointed this could alter who is the reference point for SACRE.

## SACRE/17/3. **Commission on Religious Education**

The SACRE considered an interim report published by the Commission on Religious Education (CoRE), on their developing thoughts on RE in schools in England. The report sets out initial recommendations which CoRE are looking to consult with further in order to help inform the final report, due to be published in 2018.

Key issues noted were:

1. CoRE have commissioned a separate organisation to report back to the Council on what RE in schools is currently looking like and what it should look like in the future.
2. There are four main recommendations which form part of the interim report:
  - a) A national entitlement for religious education – a basic statement of what all pupils are entitled to, whatever type of school they attend.
  - b) Holding schools to account for the provision and quality of RE – in particular seeking views on the most appropriate mechanism to do this.
  - c) Role of the SACRE – should the task of producing an Agreed Syllabus be removed from the role of SACRE?
  - d) A national plan for improving teaching and learning in RE – seeking views on what should be included and how best it might be implemented.

Points and comments included:

- That it should be possible to agree on a core set of RE topics that should be taught within schools.
- Concern was raised by members of SACRE that when RE was removed from the curriculum it was no longer treated as important.

The Chairman asked members to consider the proposals for a renewed and expanded role for SACREs.

Feedback from the SACRE included:

- The group were in agreement that the Government should publicly highlight and reaffirm the important role of the SACREs in supporting and resourcing RE.
- The group acknowledged that the SACREs role should include advising on all matters relating to religion and belief in schools.

- There was a view that the role of the SACRE should go further to include providing schools with an accredited list of suitable providers of RE and places to visit. There is currently not the capacity or resource within the SACRE to offer this service.
- The SACRE were in agreement that the funding arrangements for the SACREs are not transparent enough and there needs to be clarity as to what the budget actually is.
- Some members felt that the composition of SACREs should not be changed to include representatives of non-religious worldviews as full members.
- It was however acknowledged by the group that there are children without a faith and therefore there is a need to know about the non-religious views of children.
- The group agreed that there needs to be a review of the role of the SACRE to ensure that the group is fit for purpose and still providing a valuable service to schools.
- That there needs to be more scrutiny about the membership of the SACRE and whether or not there is a place for School Governors to be included as SACRE members.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. that the link to the questionnaire for the Commission on RE be recirculated to all members of SACRE.**
- 2. that the Chairman will feedback to the Commission on RE that the survey is not very user friendly for Primary Schools to complete.**

## **SACRE/17/4. State of the Nation Report**

The SACRE considered a report on Religious Education provision within secondary schools in England during which the following was noted:

1. The report looks at the extent to which schools in England meet their statutory requirement to teach RE.
2. The summary of recommendations from the report emphasises that schools should be held to account for the level of provision and standards of teaching of RE.
3. Ofsted should ensure that the level of provision for RE is monitored during routine inspections with an expectation that the curriculum cannot be considered 'broad and balanced' unless RE is provided.

Points and comments included:

- Concern was expressed over the number of secondary schools within Central Bedfordshire that appear to not be offering GCSE RE, with one school in particular being investigated further.
- There has been a poor response from the Religious Secondary Coordinators who were asked to provide information on how much time is spent on RE.

- It was acknowledged by the SACRE that if a school within Central Bedfordshire is found to not be offering RE as a GCSE this will be flagged to the Department for Education.
- The group felt that 'The State of the Nation Report' does overlap in its content and recommendations in many ways with the Commission on RE report into their developing thoughts on RE in schools in England.

## **RESOLVED**

**that members of SACRE should review the 'State of the Nation Report' in particular the summary of recommendations.**

### **SACRE/17/5. SACRE Development Plan**

The SACRE considered a Development Plan setting out areas for development between April 2017 – March 2018 and noted the following:

1. The content of the Agreed Syllabus will be finalised in the summer term.
2. The GCSE / A Level results data will be finalised in January 2018 and will be shared at the next SACRE meeting in February 2018.
3. During future SACRE meetings there will be a return to having a presentation from other faith groups.
4. The Annual SACRE report will be compiled next term.

Points and comments included:

- Concern was raised as to the difficult to identify and facilitate visits to appropriate schools.
- It was confirmed that the 2018 Holocaust Memorial Day Event will be taking place at Redborne Upper School week commencing 22 January. The theme will be 'the power of words.'

## **RESOLVED**

**that Mr Harpin identify those schools within Central Bedfordshire that have the RE Equality standard as these would be the most appropriate schools for members of the SACRE to visit to observe RE lessons.**

### **SACRE/17/6. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Comments**

The SACRE considered the Ofsted Spiritual, Moral and Cultural (SMSC) comments for April to July 2017 and noted the following:

1. There have been 8 inspections of schools during this period.
2. All of the 8 schools received an overall rating of good.
3. There appears to be an emerging issue with no specific mention of RE in the comments received from Ofsted rather a reference to the broad curriculum.

**RESOLVED**

**that future Ofsted reports should be reviewed to highlight any specific mention of RE particularly since the publication of the 'State of the Nation Report' and the interim report by the Commission on Religious Education (CoRE).**

**SACRE/17/7. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 27 February, 2:00pm, Priory House, Chicksands.

**SACRE/17/8. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**RESOLVED**

**that in accordance with section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude Press and Public from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that the consideration of the item is likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.**

**SACRE/17/9. Review of Agreed Syllabus Update**

The SACRE reviewed the draft 6 version of the work on the new locally Agreed RE Syllabus and made suggestions for the consultant to consider and use in further drafts.

**RESOLVED**

- 1. that the SACRE agreed to endorse the progress made on the new agreed syllabus conditional to any suggestions made during the course of the meeting being applied to the draft.**
- 2. that a joint SACRE in partnership with Bedford Borough and Luton will take place on 5 June 2018 in order to pass the new Syllabus for a September 2018 launch.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 2.00 p.m. and concluded at 4.00 p.m.)

Chairman .....

Dated .....