

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education – Meeting held on Thursday, 2nd November, 2023.

Present:-

Committee 1 – Christian Denominations and Other Faiths

Ashpreet Singh Nainu (Chair), Sue Elbrow and Waqar Bhatti

Committee 2 – Church of England

Rev Gordon Briggs and Christine Isles

Committee 3 – Representatives of Teacher Associations

Andrew Ramsey – Secondary

Ian Sharpe - Secondary

Committee 4 – Representatives of the LEA

Councillors E Ahmed (Vice-Chair), Instone and Mohindra

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Naveed and Zubayr Abbas-Bowkan, Karen Appleby, Hardip Singh Sohal, Andrea Sparrow, Priya Lamba and Robin Launder

PART 1

13. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 4 July 2023

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2023 be approved as a correct record.

14. Matters Arising

None.

15. Review of SACRE Membership Report

The Monitoring Officer, introduced the Review of SACRE membership report, which sought the SACRE's view on whether to make a recommendation to Council for a Humanist representative to be appointed to SACRE as a full voting member of Committee 1 (Christian Denomination and Other Faiths), in light of a recent High Court decision which confirmed the eligibility of Humanists to be members of SACRE.

The SACRE was invited to decide whether to recommend the appointment of a Humanist representative in Committee 1, and / or to review other representative faiths and beliefs represented in SACRE. Included in the report was information from the 2021 census as to the relative number of faith and other groupings in the Borough, including Humanists.

The SACRE professional adviser (Adviser) suggested that Committee 1 should be extended to include world views, as Humanist representation could

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be included under this category. He urged for a caution when reviewing the census, as it was imprecise.

After considering the report, Panel members broke into their respective groups to make a group decision as to whether to support the proposition that a Humanist representative be invited to join Committee 1 as a full voting member.

The votes cast were as follows:

Committee 1 – **No**

Committee 2 – **No**

Committee 3 – **Yes**

Committee 4 – **Yes**

In accordance with the outcome of the vote, the proposition was not carried.

Resolved -That the Council not be recommended to invite a Humanist representative to join Committee 1 as a full voting member.

16. Minutes of the Joint Syllabus Conference meeting held on 18 July 2023

Christine Isles reported that SACRE Hub had been renamed the Joint Syllabus Conference (JSC), which was working on the review of the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2024-2029. The JSC had developed a draft Joint Syllabus with questions that needed to be reviewed by each of the six SACREs' Agreed Syllabus Conferences. Feedback and comments relating to the questions were expected to be provided by each ASC.

The SACRE acknowledged that an ASC was required to be set up and decided its membership (rather than the whole of SACRE members) from the following volunteers:

Sue Elbrow
Ashpreet Singh Nainu
Christine Isles
Andrew Ramsey
Councillor Mohindra

It was agreed that the ACS would meet immediately after the SACRE meetings, except for the first meeting, which would be arranged for Monday 20 November 2023.

Resolved that:

- I) The minutes of the Joint Syllabus Conference be noted.
- II) That an Agreed Syllabus Conference be convened.

17. SACRE Membership Update

Members welcomed Andrew Ramsey as a representative member of Group C - Teachers (Representing Primary, Secondary and Special Schools) to the SACRE.

Resolved – That the update on SACRE Membership be noted.

18. SACRE Action Plan 2023/24 - Updated October 2023

The Adviser introduced the SACRE Action Plan up to October 2023 and provided an outline of the various activities set out under the three categories set out in the Action Plan that had been circulated with the agenda.

The Chair welcomed the work that was being done in supporting teachers of Religious Education (RE) to continually improve RE learning in schools, and pointed out that Network Meetings were particularly helpful for non-specialist teachers in developing subject knowledge.

It was also highlighted that part of the £900 contribution to the Pan-Berkshire Hub was being used to fund the review of the Pan-Berkshire Agreed Syllabus.

Resolved – That the SACRE Action Plan 2023-24 Update up to October 2023 be noted.

19. SACRE Finance Update

The Chair agreed to vary the order of this item to be considered after item 8.

The Associate director of Education and Inclusion provided a verbal update on the SACRE budget. Members were advised that the total expenditure covered the costs set out in the SACRE Action Plan amounted to £5,805, of which £4,300 was the cost of the Adviser.

The Chair emphasised the need for due diligence in keeping within the SACRE budget of £5,000 up to March 2023.

Resolved – That the SACRE Finance update be noted.

20. Draft SACRE Annual Report 2022-23

The Chair agreed to vary the order of this item to be considered before item 7.

The Adviser presented the draft SACRE Annual Report which covered the work of the Slough SACRE during the academic year from September 2022 to August 2023.

It was noted that the table of GCSE exam results for 2022/23 would be included once they had been confirmed.

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Resolved – That the SACRE Annual report 2022-23 be approved subject to minor amendments and the inclusion of KS4 and KS5 Religious Education exam results.

21. Autumn RE Newsletter 2023 - To Note

Members received the Autumn RE Newsletters which had been circulated to headteachers via TheLink website for education professionals in Slough.

It was noted that items for inclusion in the next Spring Newsletter should be sent directly to David Rees, the Adviser.

In answer to a question as to whether the newsletter was effective and in getting feedback from teachers, the Adviser explained that it was a useful way of communicating information events and available resources to teachers. The newsletters were sent to headteachers, and there was therefore no guarantee that it would reach all RE teachers/co-ordinators.

Resolved – That the Autumn RE Newsletter be noted.

22. SACRE Membership News (An update from members regarding activities undertaken since the last SACRE meeting)

Rev Gordon Briggs announced that he had been invited to give a talk on the importance of Christmas to Christians at Castleview School in December 2023.

Christine Isles reported that a number of schools would be visiting St Pauls Church in Slough, as part of the 'Christmas Unwrapped.' programme to find out about what Christians believed about Christmas.

Ian Sharpe advised that he had been invited to help develop a leaflet to aid the learning journey for pupils at Key Stage 3 & 4.

Resolved – That the updates be noted.

23. Equality and Diversity - Resources

The Adviser reported that work was currently in progress to develop resources on equality and diversity and further details would be provided in January 2024.

The Chair asked for the details to also be included in forthcoming newsletters.

Resolved – That the update on Equality and Diversity - Resources be noted.

24. SACRE Members' Attendance Record

Resolved – That the Members' attendance record be noted.

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25. Information Item - To Note

Resolved – That the SACRE briefing 36 be noted.

26. Date of Next Meeting: 6 March 2024

Members agreed that the next meeting would be held at a place of worship/school, to be confirmed prior to the next meeting.

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 6 March 2024.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 4.39 pm and closed at 6.12 pm)

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