

STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TUESDAY, 1ST MARCH, 2022

Present: Lynda Ford-Horne in the Chair

R Lawrence (Vice-Chairman), R Lawton, B Joshi,
S Hawksworth, D Kenchington, P Thomson, J Kelly,
N Coupe, I Terry, K Barker, T Willis and Cllr B Dion

Apologies: V Saunders, Cllr N Greene, Cllr M Le Poidevin and
D Pegg

75 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nicola Greene and Marion Le Poidevin and from Jindi Atwel and Vincent Saunders.

The Chair welcomed Maaria Kanamia from the Islamic Centre to her first meeting of the SACRE. The Chair also welcomed Rev. James Sharpe, attending the meeting as an observer.

76 Opening Reflection

The meeting commenced with a period of reflection.

77 Minutes of previous meeting

Subject to the correction of the spelling of two names, the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

78 Equality and Diversity update

The Chair advised that a report was not available for the current meeting.

79 Holocaust Memorial Day 2022

The Chair provided feedback about two events held in schools on 23rd January 2022 in association with Holocaust Memorial Day and, in Bournemouth schools, over 500 pupils had been involved. The Chair also described her involvement in developing an Assembly presentation introducing children of Primary School level to the subject and the initially successful and well received presentation package was being developed and refined as a resource that would be made widely available for schools.

80 Many Faiths Together

The Chair also described her role in a multi-faith group involved in visiting schools and meeting with pupils at Year 8 level. As part of the initiative, pupils were invited and encouraged to ask questions and to observe the way in which the representatives of the different faiths responding together to the different issues raised.

81 Annual Report Status

The Annual Report, set out within a newly prescribed format, was nearing completion and once submitted would be circulated to SACRE members for information.

82 Conference Updates

The SW SACRE Conference had taken place on 28th February with important keynote speeches specifically targeted at SACRE members. These included information about evolving models for teaching of RE and about the Annual Syllabus Review. Recordings and resources from the Conference would be available for dissemination.

The 'Strictly RE' conference had taken place at the end of January and again would provide a source of useful resources.

The NASCRE Conference will take place in May returning to a face-to-face format.

The 'Creative, Reinspiring RE' Conference on the theme of Islam and Humanism will be on 31st March with free spaces available for SACRE members and details of the event will be circulated after the meeting.

The SACRE underlined their support of the 'Lived Experience' approach to teaching Religious Education in schools.

83 Action Plan and Network Updates

The BCP SACRE action plan April 2021 to July 2022 as updated from February 2022 had been circulated prior to the meeting with no significant changes to the content and format. The Agreed Syllabus Review item would now be included on every Action Plan.

The next Newsletter would be issued at the end of April and contributions were invited. It remained an important part of the way in which SACRE provided support and identified resources available for RE teachers. The Newsletter would be sent to SACRE members at the same time as going to schools.

Updates were provided on the current work of the Secondary level and Primary level Lead Practitioner Hubs and the range of sessions being planned. Initiatives to involve Community Schools were described and it was hoped that funding for supply cover would be available in the next academic year. At Primary level there was emphasis on how Religious Education could be provided within the Special Needs context and on development of visits into school from representatives of different faiths.

84 National Updates

This was included with other items on the agenda.

85 Situation in Schools

Following details provided at the last meeting about Key Stage 4, the SACRE was provided with information about the take up of Religious Studies at Key Stage 5 level across the BCP area. Within the context of the response to the COVID pandemic and the use of teacher assessed grades adjusted by nationally applied algorithms, comparative attainment data was not being made available on this occasion. Detailed information about the numbers of pupils choosing to study Religious Studies was however made available and was presented in terms of comparison with other subjects at Key Stage 5. On an informal basis, attainment data was being shared to a limited extent with individual schools to support the usual process of school improvement.

In wider terms, schools continued to respond with significant resilience to the 'Living with COVID' phase of the pandemic response and, although staff and pupil absence remained high, the curriculum was being delivered. The vast majority of school-age children remained unvaccinated and the absence of School Leaders could have a significant impact locally.

Pupils sitting examinations during the current year were still impacted by the disruption although the effect varied significantly as a result of the way COVID was experienced differently across the range of different school settings. In the meantime, OFSTED was continuing its regime of inspection although their comments on the responses to more than two years of COVID were broadly positive.

The SACRE members recorded, once again, their appreciation for the work undertaken by the Council in supporting teaching staff during this time.

86 Update on 'Agreed Syllabus Review'

An update was provided on progress with the Review scheduled to take place during the 2021/22 Academic Year and SACRE was advised that, in order to commission a high quality upgrade of the existing syllabus, an 'Expression of Interest' invitation had been issued. The invitation set out criteria for the review which reflected the commitment of SACRE to providing an increasingly diverse and inclusive curriculum suitable for a new maritime city-style Council area. It listed other requirements for the project and anticipated that it could be undertaken by an expert sole provider, a group of specialists and teachers or a trust or other educational provider.

Prospective providers, when registering an interest, were being invited to outline their proposals, timeline and qualifications and experience relevant to the task. Submissions would then be reviewed against the criteria and the commission awarded within ten days of the submission date of Monday 21st March 2022. The expectation was that the first units of the Syllabus would be delivered in time for September 2022 with the remainder available online and in hard copy to schools in the BCP Council area by no later than January 2023.

87 BCP Conference

Provisional arrangements had been made for a BCP SACRE Teacher Training Conference to take place on an 'in-person' basis on 15th June 2022 at Merley House. Although there would be a small charge for attendance, SACRE members would be able to attend free of charge. The meeting of the SACRE scheduled for that day would take place at the conference venue after the conclusion of the Conference. Members were asked to reserve the date at this stage and further information would be circulated in due course.

88 'Thank You' Day

The Chair advised SACRE that this was now planned for the weekend of the Queen's Jubilee celebrations and that further information would be widely circulated as soon as possible.

89 Future Meeting Dates and Volunteers for 'Opening Reflections'

The next meeting was on 15 June 2022 after the conclusion of the Teacher Training Conference on that date. The circulated termly meeting dates for the 2022/2023 Academic Year were agreed. It was also agreed that there be a discussion at the next SACRE meeting about the venue and start times for SACRE meetings going forward into the new Academic Year.

The meeting concluded with a minute of silent reflection on events unfolding in Ukraine. The Chair also reminded members of the SACRE that BCP Council was a 'City of Sanctuary' and that it was her view that, with the influx of children from Afghanistan recently and the probable influx of children from Ukraine, BCP schools should be encouraged to become 'Schools of Sanctuary'. The Chair undertook to look into this further.

Tuesday, 1st March, 2022

Duration of the meeting: 4.00 - 5.30 pm

Chairman at the meeting on
Tuesday, 1 March 2022