

STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

WEDNESDAY, 18TH OCTOBER, 2023

Present: R Lawton, B Joshi, S Hawksworth, J Kelly (in the Chair), N Coupe, K Barker, V Saunders and Cllr M Le Poidevin

136 Welcome and Introductions.

Jane Kelly, in the Chair, welcomed members of the BCP SACRE to the meeting.

137 Apologies for absence and any declarations of interest.

Apologies for absence were received from the Chair, Lynda Ford-Horne and from Peter Thompson, Dave Pegg, Trevor Willis, Councillor Richard Burton and Councillor Mike Cox. Debs Tendler attended as an approved substitute for Linda Ford-Horne.

138 Minutes of the meeting on 21 June 2023.

The minutes of the meeting on 21 June 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

139 Update regarding Chair and Vice-Chair of BCP SACRE.

The SACRE referred once again to discussions at its previous meeting when the current Chair had indicated her intention to stand down from the position of Chair at the end of the current academic year. Jane Kelly, who was in the Chair for this meeting, indicated that she had agreed to step into the Vice-Chair role for the first two academic terms but, thereafter, a new Vice-Chair would be appointed for the meeting in the Summer term with a view to that person stepping up to the position of Chair in the Autumn term of the next academic year. Although there was acknowledgement of the pressure currently facing the teaching profession, there remained a preference, if possible, for the future Chair to be drawn from amongst the teacher membership of the SACRE. This would reflect the aspiration to alternate Chairs between the component elements of the SACRE. There would need to be further discussion of these issues at future meetings.

140 RE results update.

An initial presentation assessed results and levels of participation although subject specific data was not available for Key Stage 4. A full report would be submitted in due course to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee of BCP Council and be publicly available. There was evidence of continuing interest amongst students in taking exams in RE and Philosophy and it was pleasing to see that the subjects remained as a curriculum choice and that schools continued to value this as a subject and had a broadly good understanding of its benefits. As an example, 88 students were reported to have taken A level RE or Philosophy in the academic year 2022/23.

There was discussion around whether there could be a role for SACE in promoting RE as an examination subject on an individual and school-wide basis and this was something that could potentially be discussed in the RE networks. At the same time, the importance of RE as a subject, even if not taken as part of an examination course, should not be underestimated.

Items particularly mentioned included the way in which specific schools presented RE within their range of particular curriculum choice and 'option blocks'. The recruitment of specialist RE

teachers also remained a problem on a nationwide basis. In the meantime, the support provided through the SACRE in supporting RE teachers and providing resources directly and

through signposting was likely to continue to play a key and valued role. There were also aspirations to develop this with the Academy Trusts who currently designed and set their own subject programmes.

In response to the current situation in Israel and Gaza the SACRE was introduced to a draft of a proposed letter from the Chair of SACRE to schools signposting resources available to schools to provide them with support in addressing this important issue. Further discussion regarding the format and content of the letter would need to take place outside the meeting but there was support in principle for the initiative as set out.

141 RE Adviser update (to include Action Plan, termly newsletter, RE updates, Annual Report and Syllabus).

The BCP SACRE action plan for the period 2022-2023, updated as at October 2023, was noted and agreed.

The next Newsletter would be issued at the beginning of the new term in January 2024 and would be collated during mid-December and any contributions were invited.

142 Hubs and Networks.

The SACRE received an update on activity within the hubs and networks and a more detailed report and list of specific activities and events would be circulated after the meeting.

143 RE Conference.

There is continuing support for an RE conference locally which was very positively received by RE staff and agreement in principle to press ahead with arrangements for a conference next year. There was agreement that the conference represented a very useful contribution to staff Continuous Professional Development. Although increasingly there were constraints on sources of funding which would need to be taken into account, there were models involving self-funding which could be investigated.

The BCP Council SACRE budget had been focused this year by necessity upon the process of Syllabus Review, now completed, and there was therefore the opportunity to review the way in which the budget could be allocated going forward.

144 'Schools of Sanctuary'.

Further information about this initiative would be reported to a future SACRE meeting.

145 Inter-faith week and Holocaust Memorial Day.

Holocaust Memorial Day would be on 27 January 2024 with an event at Poole Lighthouse on Sunday 28 January. The annual Holocaust Memorial Day event for students would also be taking place at Parkstone Grammar School on 29 January.

The annual 'Inter-faith' event would take place on 23 November 2023 at Bournemouth University Talbot campus.

The '*Many Faiths Together*' project had been visiting schools in BCP Council area and in Dorset since 2019 and was now being offered free of charge for Year Group 6 onwards. The project brings together five Community Leaders representing, Buddhism, Christianity,

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Humanism, Islam and Judaism, to share multi-faith and worldview perspectives and has been positively received.

A venue was also continuing to be sought for a permanent lockable space for housing the 'Jewish Life' exhibition.

146 Future Meetings.

The confirmed meetings of the BCP SACRE for the academic year 2023/24 will be 13 March 2024 (Spring term) and 19 June 2024 (Summer term) and it was agreed that the March meeting would be a virtual format meeting.

Duration of the meeting: 4.00 - 5.35 pm

Chairman at the meeting on
Wednesday, 18 October 2023