

STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

WEDNESDAY, 23RD SEPTEMBER, 2020

Present: Lynda Ford-Horne in the Chair

R Lawton, B Joshi, S Hawksworth, P Thomson, J Atwell, J Kelly, N Coupe, I Terry, R Lawrence (Vice-Chairman), K Barker, V Saunders, Cllr B Dion, Cllr N Greene and Cllr M Le Poidevin

Apologies: N Ford, H Nait-Charif, D Kenchington, C Smith, I Harris, T Willis, D Pegg, A Harris and Knight

27 Opening Reflection

The Chairman opened the meeting with a period of guided reflection.

The Chairman also paid tribute to all staff in schools and to officers of the Council who had contributed to the response across the community in the face of the coronavirus pandemic.

28 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

29 The Minutes of the formal meeting on 05 March 2020 and notes of the informal meeting on 29 June 2020.

The Minutes and notes were agreed as a correct record.

It was noted that, in sending her apologies for absence, Alison Harris had also informed the SACRE that she would be resigning her seat on the Committee. The Chairman paid tribute to Alison's contribution to the work of SACRE over many years and advised that she would write a letter of thanks to Alison on her own behalf and on behalf of the Committee.

The Chairman provided reassurance that the proposal to establish a small sub-group of BCP SACRE to consider lessons learnt from OFSTED reports was still being pursued and that advice was awaited from NATRE on how most effectively to address this. Jane Kelly and Deneen Kenchington had already expressed an interest in being involved and anyone else who was interested was invited to contact the Chairman directly.

30 Impact of the Pandemic

Georgie Pinder (11-16 Advisor, BCP Children's Services) described the impact on education across the BCP Council area of the coronavirus pandemic and it was particularly noted that no BCP schools had closed during the pandemic period as the service continued to provide for children of key workers and those from vulnerable families.

The Chairman asked that appreciation for this achievement be referenced within the SACRE Newsletter to schools.

31 Examination Results - Impact of Pandemic

The meeting received a presentation from Georgie Pinder set out in a series of slides and a copy of the presentation in full would be circulated to BCP SACRE members. The presentation included a summary of the education context and an overview of the effect upon the process of examinations and results in 2020. The examination situation was a complex one in any event and was made even more complicated during the pandemic period but the process of assessment was set out and results data presented.

Religious Studies ('RS') as a subject area continued to be offered and available for study at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 and was offered in 13 of 16 Sixth Forms across the BCP Council area. The usual performance data was not, of course, available for 2020 in its standard format but comparison with assessments in RS was compared with the results in 2019. Although this information should not be considered as performance data, it was reported that, overall, BCP schools were performing well in RS compared with the national picture and that there remained a good opportunity to study RS to examination level for those who wished to do so.

32 Action Plan Updates

David Rees reviewed progress with delivery, including within the pandemic context, of the SACRE Action Plan. The SACRE was advised that the Religious Education subject leader training would be offered on a virtual basis. The Newsletter was also in the final course of preparation and would be circulated shortly. Importantly, he referred to the continuing level of support being provided to RE teachers and reminder teachers that they were able to contact him or the BCP Council officers direct when support was required. The updated Action Plan would be circulated to SACRE members.

33 Equality and Diversity - the Way Forward

The Chairman introduced Sam Johnson, BCP Council Policy and Performance Manager, Insight Policy & Performance, who set out, for information, the Council's equality and diversity aspirations contained within the Council's action planning framework. The structure in place for target setting and monitoring was explained and was overseen by a high-level group of officers and elected Councillors, chaired by the Chief Executive and the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder member. It was reported that the focus was upon looking across BCP Council as an organisation and identifying what could be done better. During the pandemic, a specific role had been to ensure that messages and information about the virus were reaching all parts of the community.

There was discussion about how the 'Black Lives Matter' initiative could be introduced into lesson planning. SACRE members welcomed the inclusion of this type discussion on the agenda and SACRE could offer a useful forum for bringing together the views and approaches of different faith groups. Reassurances were provided about the robust reporting of racist incidents within school settings and the reporting process was required to be set out in the behaviour management policies of individual schools with overall data being reported on a Dorset-wide basis.

The meeting was also addressed by Louise Boston-Mammah, Programme Director of local educational charity 'DEED' (Development Education in Dorset) whose objective was to provide training, support and resources to teachers. The support available included resources about local black history including the use of local perspectives to promote a wider national view and to encourage wider discussion as part of the curriculum. The extensive resources available were set out in summary and further details were accessible on the DEED website and through its Newsletter.

It was agreed the forthcoming SACRE Newsletter should include cross-reference to DEED and its offer to schools.

34 Holocaust Memorial Day ('HMD') - Update

SACRE was reminded about the 'HMD' website containing resources for schools on Holocaust memorial issues. The theme vision for the 2021 memorial event was 'Be the Light in the Darkness' and would be delivered virtually. Locally, there would also be contribution and involvement from a local person who was able to contribute a direct personal perspective. Additionally, the annual students' conference was scheduled for 27 January 2021 and currently aimed at secondary level. The meeting was advised that updates on all these events would be forwarded by email in due course.

35 SACRE Conference - Update

The 2020 SACRE Conference had been cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic but the 2021 conference would take place at least on a virtual basis if that was all that could be achieved. It was suggested that a contribution from Louise Boston-Mammah of DEED could be a useful contribution to the conference programme. Once again, further details would be made available once known. The conference was seen by BCP Council as an important element of CPD provision for teachers and there was full commitment from the Council to support this event.

Funding for the attendance of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (R Lawrence) and David Rees at the Exeter Zoom conference on Equality and Unconscious Bias was noted and agreed. In addition, it was also agreed that underspent funding allocated for the 2020 RE conference be applied towards attendance by BCP SACRE teacher representatives at the Strictly RE conference taking place over the last weekend in January 2021 with those attending reporting back to SACRE about the workshops attended.

36 Approval of Schedule of Substitutes

The BCP SACRE Constitution required the approval of a schedule of substitute members and only those who were included on the schedule would be able to take a formal part in substitution for absent SACRE members. The schedule would be updated from time to time as required. It was explained that this did not preclude informal involvement of individuals at the discretion and invitation of the Chairman.

The SACRE accordingly agreed the following schedule of formal substitutes in accordance with the terms of the Constitution:

Debs Tandler for Lynda Ford-Horne;
Peter Evans for Peter Thomson;
Chris Farrow for Tevor Willis;
Catherine Silman for Sally Hawksworth;
Emily Sallis for Karen Barker; and
Sue Bowen for Jane Kelly.

37 Dates for next meetings

It was agreed that the next meetings of BCP SACRE be held on 10th March 2021 at 4pm (Spring Term) and 16th June 2021 at 4pm (Summer Term).

In the meantime, and in closing the last meeting of 2020, the Chairman wished all colleagues a happy and healthy New Year.

Duration of the meeting: 4.00 - 5.38 pm

Wednesday, 23rd September, 2020

Chairman at the meeting on
Wednesday, 23 September 2020