

WEST BERKSHIRE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 8 MARCH 2022 VENUE: ONLINE

Present:

Group A – Other Faiths Members

Revd David Taylor (Thatcham Baptist Church)

Group B – Church of England Members

Val Bolan (Church of England), Robin Sharples (Church of England) and Mary Stagg (Church of England)

Group C – Teaching Association Members

Amanda Bedding (NEU), Clare Hawkins (NASUWT) and Chris Ward (NEU)

Group D – WBC Councillors

Councillor Lynne Doherty, Councillor Billy Drummond and Councillor Tony Linden

Also Present: Jessica Bailiss (Democratic Services Officer) and Rose Carberry (Principal Adviser for School Improvement)

Professional Consultant: David Rees

Guests: Revd Julie Howell (Church of England) and Roseanna Obsiye

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor David Marsh and Mobasshir Mushtaq (Muslim)

17 Membership

David Taylor provided the following Membership updates:

- Maria Pratico had moved away and therefore resigned from SACRE.
- Two new members had joined SACRE: Dilip Ladwa in Group A and Roseanna Obsiye in Group C. New members had to be formally recognised by Individual Decision and the process for this was underway and would be confirmed with all members via email. This would be in place by May 2022.
- Regarding the LA advisor role, David Taylor welcomed Rose Carberry to the meeting (Acting Principal Adviser for School Improvement at West Berkshire Council). At the last meeting Rose Carberry had been actioned with finding a non-faith primary Headteacher willing to join SACRE. Rose Carberry reported that she had spoken to a headteacher who was a federated headteacher of both a church and non-church school (the Ilsley's and Hampstead Norreys) that might be willing to attend and she was awaiting confirmation on this.

ACTIONS:

- **Janet Giddings to inform members of SACRE via email once the Individual Decision process had concluded regarding the new members joining SACRE.**

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- Rose Carberry to report back to the next meeting on the progress with finding a non-faith Headteacher to join the group.

18 Minutes of the last SACRE Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd November 2021 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

19 Actions (not covered elsewhere)

There were no actions raised that had not been covered elsewhere.

20 2021-22 Budget Update and Action Plan - David Rees, Professional Consultant

David Rees drew attention to the latest version of the action plan on page 11 of the agenda. The action plan included items that SACRE had to/would like to do and also items where there was a hub commitment. David Rees reported that the statutory items were being carried out in West Berkshire including termly meetings and subscribing to NASACRE.

David Rees added that monitoring of the locally agreed syllabus had also been added to the action plan because it was an ongoing item.

David Rees moved on to section B of the action plan regarding supporting teachers of RE to continually improve RE learning in their schools. Section C of the action plan included actions involved in supporting the ongoing work of the Pan Berkshire Hub. Items on the action plan written in italics were items that 'could' be done and David Rees drew attention to the last item on the action plan, which was regarding a hub conference and whether one should take place in 2022. Teacher conferences were something that most SACRE's tried to hold annually.

David Rees welcomed item suggestions for the action plan and highlighted that there was a budget available. Creative ideas on how to use this were encouraged.

David Taylor asked for the latest version of the budget to be shared with the group. This showed normal funding available and Covid Recovery funding that had been received in 2021/22. The information set out how the funding had been used.

Councillor Lynne Doherty noted that the budget detail included 'Wokingham contribution to SACRE'. David Taylor stated that this was a historic matter because funds had previously been channelled in this way. This was the last time this would be detailed in the budget information because funding would now go directly to the diocese of Oxford, which provided the service that chaired the hub.

21 Schools

David Taylor referred to the West Berkshire RE exam results and reported that Janet Giddings would forward this information to all following the meeting.

David Rees provided an update on the primary and secondary networks. David Rees reported that he had attended the south west SACRE conference the previous week, which was an annual event and he encouraged others to attend. He had co-run a session at the conference regarding what SACRE's could do for teachers and what support teachers required. A key point that had come to light was that many SACRE's did not run networks, which were extremely valuable.

The next primary meeting was on 29th March 2022 and these took place on a termly basis. There were still some schools where there was uncertainty about who the RE

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coordinator was. The email database for the group was slowly increasing in size and this meant that support could be provided directly. The next primary network would be used to roll out issues that had been raised at Strictly RE.

The secondary networks were run separately by the RE lead at St Bart's as part of the SLA agreement and David Rees attended these meetings when he was able to. He would liaise with the group regarding the issues raised about the new GCSEs. Clare Hawkins reported that she would be attending the next secondary networks meeting and would report back regarding the leadership role currently held by St Bart's at the next meeting of SACRE.

Rose Carberry referred to the primary and secondary networks and stated she could include any information in relation to these with her weekly email to headteachers which was circulated on a Thursday. David Rees stated he would send information through to Rose Carberry following the meeting to help reach further people and increase attendance.

David Rees summarised that the networks were going very well and were used to feedback about local and national developments and in particular any free resources.

Clare Hawkins reported that care packages had now been sent out by some of her sixth form students and some good feedback had been received. There was still plans to do the subject knowledge CPD and this would be Clare Hawkins' next project. This was an area very much appreciated by teachers.

ACTION:

- **Janet Giddings to forward the exam results to all following the meeting.**
- **Clare Hawkins to report back to the next SACRE meeting regarding the secondary network leadership role.**
- **David Rees to send information regarding the primary and secondary networks to Rose Carberry for inclusion in her weekly email to headteachers.**

22 Hub - David Rees, Professional Consultant

David Taylor introduced the item (7.1) and reported that he had attended the hub meeting on 7th March and stated that discussion was required by the group on this item.

David Taylor referred to the Real People Read Faith videos. He explained that the SACRE's in Berkshire had received some funding to create videos in places of worship with faith leader for use with Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. The videos could be viewed at berkshiresacrehub.blogspot.com.

It was felt that as an initiative it was worth extending. There would be more funding available for this area coming from the Reading Faith Forum. David Taylor stressed that it was important that teachers were made aware of the videos and used them. He asked SACRE members who worked in schools to encourage use of the videos. Teacher feedback was very welcome.

Clare Hawkins commented that a video had been used at her school earlier in the day and had been well received by students. Robin Sharples reported that positive feedback had been received from the Diocese regarding the videos and church schools were being encouraged to use them. David Rees stated that he had referred to the videos at network meetings and also included information on them in the newsletter.

David Taylor introduced the next item (7.2) regarding the new syllabus. Every five years SACRE was responsible for producing a new agreed syllabus for West Berkshire and the

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next one was required in 2023. Previously this process had been carried out in conjunction with the other Berkshire SACREs. The process would begin with a review of the current syllabus and this needed to happen in 2022. There were three possible outcomes; a new syllabus would need to be written and adopted; the current syllabus would be amended and subsequently adopted or it was possible no changes would be required.

It was acknowledged that there was increased pressure on schools as a result of covid. The process for refreshing the syllabus needed to begin in 2022 however, David Taylor explained that there were some choices that needed to be made by SACRE. The process started with a survey of schools to gain the views of RE teachers about the current syllabus and this survey had been sent out. Only 56 responses had been received from the whole of Berkshire and it was likely that this was due to the pressure schools were currently under. Consideration needed to be given to whether the survey should be continued, which would need to be followed by an Agreed Syllabus Conference. This was responsibility of each SACRE however, the choice could be taken to do this within the hub.

David Taylor asked for views from SACRE on whether the process should be postponed for a further year. The hub had been in favour of this approach to give teachers more time and relieve pressure.

David Rees explained that there were things that had changed since the last syllabus was created and this would need reflecting and therefore he was in favour of tweaking the current syllabus. He felt it would be a good idea to remain working within the hub. It was felt that 56 responses was not a poor response rate given the pressure schools were under. The survey was commended for being short and succinct. David Rees stated that he would try to help address completion of the survey through the network meetings.

Amanda Bedding stated that she was a teacher in a West Berkshire school however, had not seen the survey and queried when it had been sent out. David Taylor commented that the survey should have been sent out from Janet Giddings and he would double check this. Chris Ward confirmed that he had also not received the link. David Taylor confirmed that the deadline for the survey was not yet closed. It was suggested that the link could be sent out as part of Rose Carberry's weekly email.

David Rees believed the link had been sent out about nine months ago and had also been included in one of his newsletters. It was unlikely however, that it had been re-circulated recently.

Clare Hawkins queried if the hub were in support of delaying the process until the next academic year or calendar year. David Taylor confirmed that he was referring to the academic year.

Clare Hawkins was in support of the process being delayed until the next academic year but suggested the survey be re-circulated within the next month or two because she was aware that her SLT was currently going through the national curriculum. It would be helpful if the deadline allowed time for the necessary conversations to take place. David Taylor stated that the hub had been of the view that the process should be delayed until 2023 rather than September of 2022.

SACRE was of the view that the process for refreshing the syllabus should be delayed until the next academic year (2023) due to the pressure faced by schools. This view had been guided by the view of teachers both on SACRE and on the hub.

David Taylor referred to a discussion that had taken place at the hub meeting regarding some unused funding and asked teacher members of SACRE what training could be

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offered to RE leads that would move them forward; what were the specific areas for improvement and how might training best be packaged or delivered.

Clare Hawkins stated that this had been something that had been raised at the network meetings. One particular area of focus requested was subject knowledge. Teachers had voiced that they felt confident in how they were teaching but not always what they were teaching. Clare Hawkins stated she would be happy to raise this again at the next network meeting. David Taylor commented that this would fit with the Ofsted move towards substantive, disciplinary and personal knowledge. David Taylor welcomed any further feedback from SACRE members. Amanda Bedding added that something that had been raised by her RE lead contacts was in relation to assessment in RE at primary level. David Taylor stated that he would feed comments back to the hub.

ACTION:

- **Jess Bailiss to check with Janet Giddings when the link to the survey regarding the syllabus had been circulated.**
- **David Taylor would send the link to Rose Carberry to for circulation.**
- **David Taylor would feedback to the hub that West Berkshire SACRE were in support of delaying the process for refreshing the syllabus until the next academic year during 2023.**
- **David Taylor would feedback comments from SACRE regarding how the unused funding could be utilised.**

23 Newsletter - David Rees, Professional Consultant

David Taylor introduced the item, which aimed to update SACRE on the newsletter produced by David Rees and could be found within the agenda pack on page 13.

David Rees reported that the newsletter was quite a long document and this reflected the amount of activity taking place. The Real People Real Faith article was provided within each addition of the newsletter. David Rees stated that he was going to try and focus on a clip or two going forward to reduce the length of the article and tie it in with a festival that was approaching. He would take this approach from April 2022. David Rees provided detail about each of the areas reported on within the newsletter.

David Rees highlighted that there was a section on the Agreed Syllabus Review and the survey on page 14.

David Rees invited SACRE to read the newsletter and inform him if there was anything they felt was missing or would be good to include. He also invited them to provide a paragraph for the newsletter on any areas such as events that they would like included. The next newsletter would go out towards the end of April 2022.

ACTION: Members of SACRE to inform David Rees if there were further areas they would like including in the newsletter and where possible provide some text that could be included.

24 Strictly RE - David Rees, Professional Consultant

David Rees introduced the item and reported that the Strictly RE conference had taken place at the end of January. He had attended the event and it had been extremely positive. David Rees reported that he always tried to attend sessions that would benefit the teachers in his area including topics such as diversity and tradition. Some good subject knowledge had been provided at the event, which David Rees would now be rolling out through the different networks and newsletters.

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Amanda Bedding agreed that the event had been well worth attending. Key note speakers at the event had been excellent. She reported that she had attended sessions on RE in Key Stage 1 and the area of progression, which had been very useful. Amanda Bedding would share ideas from the event at her school and with a network she would be leading the following week.

David Rees reported on other events that he was involved in. There was a lot of useful information being rolled out nationally that he would be helping to communicate to networks and teachers locally.

25 Equality & Diversity

David Taylor reported that he had been trying to contact Pamela Voss to see if she could attend SACRE meetings. Councillor Lynne Doherty reported that she would contact Pamela Voss after the meeting.

ACTION: Councillor Doherty would contact Pamela Voss regarding attending SACRE going forward. (Post minute comment: Pamela Voss was contacted following the meeting and has agreed to attend the next meeting on 24th May 2022.)

26 May and November Meeting Dates and Venues

The 24th May and 1st November were agreed as the next two meetings dates for SACRE starting at 4.15pm.

It was agreed by SACRE that the next meeting should take place as a hybrid meeting in the Roger Croft Room at the Council Officers in Market Street.

ACTION: The Roger Croft Room be booked for the next meeting of SACRE on 24th May at 4.15pm so that the meeting could take place in a hybrid format. (Post minute comment: the RC room has been booked for date/time)

27 Any Other Business

Rosanna Obsiye reported that the Willink were now proceeding with teaching their first year of RE A-level. The AQA syllabus was being used and Roseanna Obsiye asked if there were any links that could be formed with other schools within West Berkshire that were also teaching RE A-level to see what was working well and to learn about any resource sharing opportunities. Clare Hawkins reported that she would raise this at the network. Little Heath and Denefield schools were two possibilities where links might be able to be made.

ACTION: Clare Hawkins to raise the point of link opportunities at the next network meeting regarding other schools that were teaching RE at A-level.

28 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the under-mentioned item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as contained in Paragraph 3 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the [Local Government \(Access to Information\)\(Variation\) Order 2006](#). [Rule 8.10.4 of the Constitution also refers.](#)

29 Support for Individual Schools

(Paragraph 3 – information relating to financial/business affairs of particular organisation)

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SACRE considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 13) which involved a discussion on support for individual schools.