

WEST BERKSHIRE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2020

VENUE: COMMITTEE ROOM COUNCIL OFFICES MARKET STREET NEWBURY

Present:

Group A – Other Faiths Members

Mr Mobasshir Mushtaq (Muslim) and Revd David Taylor (Thatcham Baptist Church)

Group B – Church of England Members

Mrs Val Bolan (Church of England), Maria Pratico (Church of England) and Mr Robin Sharples (Church of England)

Group C – Teaching Association Members

Bernard Eggleton (NASUWT)

Group D – WBC Councillors

Councillor Billy Drummond (WBC), Councillor Tony Linden and Councillor David Marsh

Also Present: David Rees, Professional Adviser,
Rachel Manley, LA Adviser
Janet Giddings. Clerk

1 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Apologies were received from:

- Councillor Peter Argyle
- Clare Hawkins
- Rabbi Zvi Solomons
- Mary Stagg

Unfortunately the RE undergraduates who were due to accompany Clare Hawkins were unable to attend. Their visit has been postponed to a later date.

2 Discussion with Donna Fox

The Chair of West Berkshire SACRE, David Taylor, welcomed Donna Fox, Principal Adviser for School Improvement at West Berkshire to the meeting.

2.1 The role of Principal Adviser for School Improvement

Donna Fox was a teacher for 8 years and a Headteacher for 19 years before joining West Berkshire Council in 2019. Her responsibilities include schools and adult and community learning. Donna has a degree in RE and is interested in the development of critical and spiritual thinking. During her teaching career she helped to develop the RE syllabus in Hampshire and renamed the subject 'FAB' (Faith and Belief) to encourage children's interest.

2.2 Working together to promote RE in schools

Donna is keen to support SACRE by liaising with Rachel Manley, the LA Adviser. She is also happy to be involved in producing the next syllabus for implementation in 2023-24, with the aim of inspiring and challenging learners.

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Members discussed the provision of RE in local schools with Donna Fox. Councillor David Marsh raised concerns about Park House School in his Ward. The school teaches Character and Values and was rated Good in all areas following an Ofsted inspection in October 2019. The school offers a GCSE RS option to those in Key Stage 4 but no-one has chosen to study it. David Taylor made contact with Park House School recently and was disappointed that not much had changed. Bernard Eggleton expressed concern that targets would change with new inspection criteria. He was reassured by Donna Fox that the new Ofsted framework is intended to build on the previous framework.

Donna Fox suggested writing to Ofsted Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, highlighting the concerns SACRE members had regarding the provision of RE in West Berkshire and the legal requirement to teach RE.

Robin Sharples asked about worship and assembly. The distinction between Collective Worship and assemblies was discussed at the last SACRE meeting in November 2019. Donna Fox suggested primary schools introduce a weekly topic e.g. peace to be explored by each year group during the week, concluding in an end of week assembly. Penny Judge and Sue Ball attended the last meeting to explain how they implement this at Thatcham Park Primary School.

3 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12th November 2019 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 12th November 2019.

5 Actions (not covered elsewhere)

5.1 Progress on newsletter

Clare Hawkins was unable to present this item. Janet Giddings showed members a sample newsletter Clare had prepared. It may be possible to publish this on the Education Portal in addition to sending via the email distribution lists for primary and secondary schools in West Berkshire. Members were invited to submit items for inclusion in the first newsletter e.g. events, diary dates.

Action: Janet Giddings will agree with Clare Hawkins to send a draft copy of the newsletter to members before it is published.

6 Membership

6.1 Rachel Manley, Maria Pratico and Zvi Solomons have now been formally appointed.

Rachel Manley is Headteacher at Yattendon CE Primary School and is an adviser to SACRE, replacing Keith Harvey. In 2019 Yattendon CE Primary School was awarded the Gold RE Mark from the RE Council of England and Wales, and the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) judged the school an 'excellent' establishment. The school is only the third in the Oxford Diocese to be awarded this honour.

Maria Pratico and Zvi Solomons have re-joined SACRE. Maria Pratico has 42 years' teaching experience and was Head of RE at St Bartholomew's School, Newbury until she retired in 2014. David Taylor explained that Zvi Solomons attended the last SACRE meeting, but may only be able to attend one meeting each year.

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There are vacancies in Group A – Other Faiths Members. SACRE members were asked to invite new members from other faiths to join.

7 Schools

7.1 West Berks RE exam results

Members reviewed the GCSE and A Level exam charts included in the Agenda Pack. Exam results were received from The Downs School on 26th February (the day after the SACRE meeting). The charts have been updated and are included with these minutes.

David Rees said it would be useful to know how many students were in each year group to identify the number studying RE.

7.2 Primary Schools/Network

David Rees presented an update on the Primary School RE Leaders' Network. At the last meeting on 4th February 2020, the group discussed the importance of RE and the impact if it was not implemented. The 2019 Ofsted Framework focuses on the three I's: Intent, Implementation and Impact. David Rees introduced free online resources and current reports relevant to those teaching RE in primary schools.

7.3 Secondary Schools/Network

David Rees presented an update on the Secondary School RE Leaders' Network and said the last meeting was well attended. RE is not taught widely at GCSE or A Level in secondary schools in West Berkshire or in the Poole and Bournemouth area where David advises their local SACRE. Ofsted does not appear to recognise it as a standalone or academic subject.

Councillor David Marsh said he intends to visit Park House School in his Ward in the new academic year and offered to mention the network meetings to the new Head.

8 2020-21 Action Plan and Budget - David Rees

David Rees presented the West Berkshire (WB) SACRE Action Plan, April 2020-March 2021 as included in the Agenda pack, referring to the following items:

A. CORE BUSINESS, Actions 5. Subscribe to NASACRE

WB SACRE is a member of the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (NASACRE). The aims of NASACRE are to:

- assist SACREs to fulfil their responsibilities;
- represent their common concerns to other bodies;
- assist in the training and mutual consultation of SACRE members;
- encourage the development of the SACREs;
- undertake such other activities, appropriate to SACREs, as may benefit RE and collective worship

A SACRE Briefing is issued termly which covers national issues and news from local SACREs.

B. To support teachers of RE to continually improve RE learning in their schools, Action 2. Support secondary network

David Rees said WB SACRE were lucky to have a secondary network. It enables discussion about the GCSE curriculum and how RE is taught at secondary level.

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Bernard Eggleton asked if pupils were given the opportunity to discuss current topics during the school day other than in assemblies. David Rees said RE can and should respond to the world around us.

Budget

David Rees explained he advised a number of SACREs whose combined budgets enabled him to attend more events and share feedback.

Action: Janet Giddings to ask Vicky Pearce, West Berkshire Council for a budget statement.

9 **Berkshire Hub - David Taylor**

9.1 *Real People, Real Faith* Video Project update

David Taylor presented an update on this professionally filmed video project funded by the recent successful Westhill Bid.

Visits were made to a Shia mosque in Reading and a local synagogue. Planned visits include:

Monday 9th March, 4 – 6pm

Reading Hindu Mandir, 112 Whitley St, Reading RG2 0EQ

Tuesday 10th March, 4 – 6 pm

St Michaels' Church Warfield, Church Lane, RG42 6EE

Wednesday 25th March, 4 – 6pm

Slough Baptist Church Windsor Rd, Slough SL1 2EJ

Friday 3rd April, 4 – 6 pm

GMG Gurdwara 221 Bath Road Slough SL14BA

These dates have been shared with local primary and secondary schools who are invited to participate.

Action: Mobasshir Mushtaq offered to help arrange a visit to a Sunni mosque.

9.2 SACRE Conference at Easthampstead Park, Thursday 2 July 2020, 6pm-9pm

David Taylor invited members to this event. The contribution SACRE makes to the hub enables up to 8 members to attend.

10 **Questions from Students - Clare Hawkins**

This item was adjourned to a later date.

11 **Any Other Business**

No further business was discussed.

12 **Date of Next Meeting - Tuesday 19th May, 4.15pm**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 19th May, 4.15pm at Yattendon Primary School, RG18 0UR. The school has a car park.

The guest speaker is Joni McAuliffe (Christian Outreach in Newbury Schools).