

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Minutes of Meeting, 25 November 2010

		ACTION
1	Welcome	
	New members were welcomed to the meeting along with members of the public who came as observers. The meeting took place during Interfaith Week.	
2	Matters arising from Minutes of meeting, 13 September	
2.1	Faith makes a Difference (interactive website)(2). Letters of thanks have been sent to pupils at the two schools which trialled the site. The meeting wondered if NASACRE should be made aware of the website's existence and it was agreed that Guy and Simone should prepare a letter.	Guy/ Simone
2.2.1	Agreed Syllabus Website (4.2.2). Representatives of the Curriculum, Finance and IT Working Parties have together met with both John McAdam and Television Junction about updating the website in order to make it more user friendly and to market material on a larger scale.	
2.2.2	The present website has outgrown its purpose. It was conceived as a developmental tool where material could be uploaded to support the Agreed Syllabus with different access routes for teachers, governors and others. This will involve going back almost to stage 1 of the process. Funding is available in both this year's budget and next.	
2.2.3	As John no longer has time to work on the website, Paul Davies proposed inviting a company called Substrakt to undertake this work. Birmingham will remain the main focus; the site will give details of local places of worship and local interest.	
2.3	Ofsted Inspections (5.2) . A letter had been sent to Alan Brine, the Chief Inspector of RE at Ofsted, about the lack of information in inspection reports concerning RE and Collective Worship. His reply was that there was not enough time within the inspection period but he would pass the comments on to the review team.	
2.4	New Sikh Free School - <i>omitted from previous minutes</i> . Gopinder Kaur had mentioned the new Sikh Free School. The ethos of the school will reflect the Agreed syllabus and the 24 Dispositions will be used as a framework to drive the curriculum. It was agreed that Gopinder and Ranjit Singh Dhanda be invited to give more information at a future meeting.	Next meeting

3 **Chair's Business**

3.1 **Faith Leaders Group.** The Group is very supportive of the work of SACRE in Birmingham. They had written to Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education, about the review of the curriculum and asking to have some input. They meet again on 8 December and Marius will be attending to talk about the religious education.

3.2.1 **RE in the Curriculum.** The Government White Paper was issued yesterday, 24 November. A number of members of SACRE had looked at the sections where RE might have been mentioned but there was none. The consultation period is scheduled to end on 8 December.

3.2.2 RE is not included in the humanities subjects that would form part of the proposed English baccalaureate and if it should be considered as an Arts subject then there is no mention of the Arts either. It is possible that schools might choose to be proactive and offer RE as one of the additional subjects required for this award since it will already be being taught. There is no intention to change primary legislation which would mean that RE would remain a statutory part of the curriculum.

3.2.3 Some members felt it might be a good thing that RE was not singled out; if its role were to be undermined this would lead to a reduction in the number of RE advisers. The meeting felt no opportunity should be missed to emphasise the contribution made by RE; a letter should be sent to the Minister.

3.3 **Jackie Hughes.** It was agreed that a letter be sent on behalf of SACRE to Jackie Hughes who retires at the end of the month. She has always been supportive of work on the Agreed syllabus. Members also signed a card for her to wish her well in her retirement.

4 **Working Parties**

4.1.1 **Collective Worship.** The group had found some confusion over the terminology in use; this had previously been brought to SACRE for discussion. The working party had now considered the Determination process whereby schools apply to lift the obligation for Collective Worship to be wholly or mainly of a Christian character. They submitted a new simplified form for approval which they proposed should now be used. Applications should be reviewed after 5 years to take account of any demographic changes. After some minor amendments to the form this was approved by all committees.

4.1.2 The Collective Worship Group would also like to undertake sampling

of good practice in Collective Worship but has yet to decide on the details: who would do it and for what purpose?

4.1.3 It was reported that a letter by Ekklesia, British Humanists and teacher unions amongst others had been sent to the Secretary of State for Education asking for the removal of Collective Worship as a statutory requirement. This will be discussed at the next Collective Worship meeting on 2 December for action in support of collective worship.

4.2 **Finance.** The Finance Group met with David Perkins to review the budget. Funding is available for any working group that wishes to submit a bid for funding. It is expected that the budget for 2011-12 will be in line with that for the current year.

4.3 **Curriculum.**

1. Work is now focusing on dovetailing the KS1 films into schemes of work. This will be supported by some KS1 teachers.
2. The website has been updated with new material.
3. The working group will be supporting Celebrating RE week in March.

4.4 **Publicity.** Sior Coleman reminded the meeting that there is a statutory obligation to compile an Annual Report and asked for new people to undertake this task. A meeting date for this group has yet to be arranged.

4.5 **IT.** Rabbi Arkush was pleased to report that membership of this group has recently doubled. Additional members will also be welcome. At present the group attends website meetings and offers advice but it will be happy to take on some additional responsibility.

4.6 **Pupil Related Projects.** The group is supporting the Celebrating RE event in March by showcasing work arising from the new syllabus.

4.7 **Relationships and Sexual Health.** The group has met several times and is working on identifying teaching topics that link to the dispositions. Jill Stolberg said that *RE Today* has also produced some materials on this topic that had been trialled by Rachel Jepson at Rookery Primary School. She suggested the group speak with Rachel and perhaps find out more about these materials.

4.8 **Humanism.** The group will be meeting to receive an input from John Edwards at its next meeting on 8 December and will then be in a position to make recommendations to SACRE.

5 **Celebrating RE, 21-25 March 2011**

5.1 The Chairs' Group has met to plan events for schools and others.

There will be some additional activities, perhaps involving people from the arts, for the pupils to attend during the day and maybe an evening event. Participation might also be extended to include Faith Guides. The week coincides with the Cadbury Lectures to be given by the Bishop and Archbishop of Birmingham all that week, 5.00-7.00 pm at the University of Birmingham. In due course details will be included in the *Celebrating RE* newsletter.

- 5.2 Members of SACRE asked if there would be anything for parents or governors and hoped that all faith traditions could be included. There might, for example, be some opening to the public of different places of worship.

6 **Development Plan**

The document does not take account of all the working parties or changes to representation. At present it mentions the new syllabus being used but not being embedded. It was proposed and accepted that discussion should be delayed until there has been more time for the plan to be reviewed and updated.

7 **Determinations**

- 7.1 Only sections 1,2 and 7 of applications for a determination were considered in accordance with the agreement reached earlier (4.1).

- 7.2 **City Road Primary School.** The meeting was informed that the Governing Body has met regularly since the 2009 date mentioned on the application form. The application was approved.

- 7.3 **Parkfield Primary School.** The application was approved.

8 **Any other business**

- 8.1 **Leave of absence for festivals and holy days.** Simone has been asked to update a list compiled a few years ago which identifies religious days where absence from school would be unavoidable. She stressed that circumstances in school could be such that leave of absence might not be granted, but there is some leeway for an appeal to the governing body. Committee B recognised that they were in a privileged position and felt it was not right to comment on the requirements of other faiths; they supported the views of Committee A in this matter. The professional Associations reminded the meeting that these days should not be used for staff training. Schools can negotiate variations to the school holidays but this needs approximately 12 month's notice.

- 8.2 **Faith Guides.** Ruth Tetlow was invited to address the meeting about the Faith Guides training programme whose work has received a financial contribution from SACRE.

1. There have been 3 courses in the last 3 years
2. 41 people have been trained; 39 people remain in Birmingham
3. 20 places of worship involved
4. 7 different faiths
5. 4 new courses starting in January in Wolverhampton, Sandwell, Walsall and Coventry but no more at present in Birmingham

8.2.2 Ruth would welcome comments from teachers and ideas on how to develop the scheme further. She has already arranged for a group of guides from different faiths to work with pupils in a school outside the city and would like to develop this form of working further. Where she was asked to provide people to visit a school she did ask for travel expenses to be met and perhaps for a donation as well. Sandra Bailey said that the Cathedral had visits from schools with predominantly Muslim pupils and received good feedback from staff and pupils on their evaluation forms.

8.3 **Jubilee Debt Campaign.** Audrey Miller distributed leaflets about the Jubilee Debt Campaign, a multi-faith organisation. Short excerpts are available online of interviews from members of the public. Copies will be available in schools.

Dates of future meetings

- Tuesday 15 February, 1.00-4.00 pm
- Thursday 16 June, 6.00-9.00 pm
- Monday 19 September, 6.00-9.00 pm

SACRE Attendance, 25 November

Organisation	Name	Surname	
Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais	Val	Johnston	apologies
Heart of England Baptist Association	Sior	Coleman	present
West Midlands Buddhist Council	Tony	Lister	apologies
Council of Black Led Churches	Richard	Daley	
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Birmingham Churches Together	Gareth	Davies	present
Duke Street Chapel	Janet	Hopton	present
Churches Associated with the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches	Sue	Fearon	apologies
Hindu Community	Ravi	Ladva	
	Nilesh	Chauhan	
International Mahavia Jain Mission	Arvinder	Jain	apologies
Representative Council of Birmingham and Midland Jewry	Shmuel	Arkush	present
	Loretta	Cohn	present
Methodist Church District	Peter	Bates	apologies
	Zahida	Hussain	present
	Malik	Hussain	apologies
	Yusuf	Ahmed	apologies
	Abdlkarim	Hussein	
Muslim Liaison Committee	Badr	ul-Haque	
	Tahir	Alam	
Greek Orthodox Church	Kosmas	Pavrides	
Rastafarian Community	Jennifer	Moses	apologies
Roman Catholic Church	Mary	Baines	
Sikh Community	Jagbir	Jhutti-Johal	apologies
	Gopinder	Kaur	
United Reform Church	Marius	Felderhof	present
ATL	Christine	Tanquee	present
	Bethan	Ruth	present
NAHT	Sue	Baker	apologies
	Sandra	Bailey	present
NASUWT	Trevor	Kight	
NASUWT	Derek	O'Dowd	apologies
NASUWT			
NUT	Lucretia	Fields	present
ASCL	Ronald	Skelton	apologies
Church of England	Jill	Stolberg	present
	Gillian	Beal	present
	Rachel	Jepson	apologies
	Toby	Howarth	apologies
	Tricia	Wick	apologies
	David	Isiorho	present
Birmingham City Council	Susan	Axford	
	Stuart	Clarkson	
	Paulette	Hamilton	apologies
	Jon	Hunt	apologies
	Mohammed	Fazal	
	Gurdial	Atwal	
	Guy	Hordern	Present