

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (KENT)

MINUTES of SACRE meeting held at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 20 March 2007.

PRESENT: Mr R Bristow (Chairman), Rabbi C Cohen, Mrs V Corbyn, Mr M Dance (substitute for Mr B Bassam), Mrs P Fairchild, Mr G Horne, Mr I Jones, Father A Kinnane, Mr G Lancaster, Mr E Mulhearn, Mr M Papadopoulos, Mr S Platnauer, Miss E Pope, Mr T Setchell, Miss S Shaw, Mr R Singh-Gill, Rev Canon J Smith, Mrs V Thornewell, Mr J Viner, Mrs J Watts, Miss J Webb, Mr A M Weinberg, and Mrs U Williams.

GUESTS: Mrs J Davies, Chairman Medway SACRE.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs P Draycott (Curriculum Adviser for RE and Citizenship), Mr A Foster (Lead Adviser and Adviser for PSHE), Mrs L Miller (CFE Directorate), and Mr G Rudd (Democratic Services).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Membership:

(1) The resignation of Mrs Lulla Michael – Greek Orthodox (Group 1) was noted. Mr Bristow agreed to write to Mrs Michael to thank her for her valuable service.

(2) The appointments of Mr M Papadopoulos – Greek Orthodox (Group 1), Mrs J Watts, St Paul's CE Junior School, Rusthall (CE Group 2, Rochester Diocesan Board of Education), and Mrs U Williams, Hindu Representative (Group 1), were noted, and Members welcomed them to the meeting.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2006 were approved as a true record. Copies of REact Kent Agreed Syllabus referred to in Item 2 of the Minutes were available for Members at the end of the meeting.

3. Budget Issues

(1) Mrs Miller reported the current budget was fully committed, and next year's budget would be to the same level of funding as in previous years.

(2) Mrs Miller reminded Members to get their expense claims forms in as soon as possible.

(3) Mr Foster referred to Additional Curriculum Development Funding opportunity for training development. This was noted by the Members.

(4) RESOLVED that the Budget report be received.

4. Development Plan - Steering Group Report

Steering Group Report

(1) Members had received a paper on progress to date and Mr Viner invited Members comments.

(2) Mr Horne referred to page 3 of the plan and asked to be kept informed on the progress made of the development of mobile places of worship. In response to a request from Mrs Fairchild, Mr Foster clarified what was meant by mobile places of worship. Rev Canon Smith felt that advice would be needed about what should be in the mobile places of worship. Mrs Draycott explained that they would be a simulation not an actual place of worship and that people in the Local Authority and SACRE would be able to offer advice as well as advice coming from members of the faiths concerned.

(3) Mr Bristow asked the Steering Group to bear in mind the updating of the 'Shaping the Spirit' document. Mr Foster agreed that 'Shaping the Spirit' as a first or at least equal source of materials was a very good document but that the priority had to be looking at support material for acts of worship. Mrs Draycott felt that the Collective Worship document for schools was outdated. Mr Bristow thought more in need of renewal than outdated. Mr Platnauer wanted to see a time frame for looking at 'Shaping the Spirit' although Mrs Draycott advised that it was a bit too early to do this until QCA's proposals were known.

(4) Mr Viner confirmed that the Group was endeavouring to move beyond routine matters and that the involvement of all SACRE members in this was crucial. He welcomed the fuller representation that we have been able to secure on the Christian and other faith groups committee.

(5) Mrs Draycott referred to the launch of the Kent Agreed Syllabus and took the view that it was likely to have a five year life span before needing to be statutorily reviewed again. She encouraged schools to see it as a five year cycle of implementation, embedding and sustaining good practice. Mr Foster reported that there had been a lot of interest and support for the KAS from schools (including some in the independent sector) and from governors.

(6) Mr Horne referred to the issue of Collective Worship and enquired as to whether Kent schools conformed to the statutory requirements. Mr Bristow confirmed that the church schools did, although Mr Foster thought generally the provision of collective worship was patchy. Mr Platnauer had concerns about the moral development of pupils with the lack of daily worship being considered. Mrs Draycott advised SACRE that daily worship had not been included in the Agreed Syllabus because it had its own statutory requirements. She reported that moral development had not been left out. This and spiritual development were an important part of collective worship (and RE). Mr Lancaster felt that there was a disparity between primary and secondary schools on this and enquired as to whether there was going to be an attempt to remedy this. Mrs Draycott agreed that there was a significant difference and that a working party would need to look at this. Mr Bristow agreed that it was important to find out what was happening with collective worship and sought views on the best way to set up a working party. Mr Foster felt that the Agreed Syllabus Group had been effective. He suggested the summer meeting would be the best time to convene a working group. He added that neither he nor Mrs Draycott would have time this academic year and therefore more likely to be considered for a September/Autumn start. Mr Foster suggested that

the Group convenors come up with suggestions and nominations for the next meeting. Mrs Draycott thought two Members from each Group would be the best solution to be decided at Group pre meetings immediately prior to the next SACRE meeting. Mr Bristow agreed to let Mrs Younosi know what was happening. A further suggestion from Mr Viner was that the Christ Church students could be asked to look at these researching aspects of collective worship.

(7) Rev Canon Smith referred to Section 5 Item 3, and the importance of schools having regard to similarities and differences between religion, ethnicity and culture. His concern was that many schools, did not understand this. Mrs Draycott agreed and suggested that reference to this needed to be made in any revision of the Shaping of the Spirit document. At this stage of the meeting reference was made to the request for a volunteer to look at policy documents regarding Equality Impact Assessment on KCC employment policies. Rev Canon Smith volunteered his services for this.

(8) Mr Foster recommended that SACRE should review its self evaluation in the near future. Mrs Miller reported that there were proposals to amend the format of the Annual Report so that it included self evaluation.

5. NASACRE - AGM, Tuesday 8 May 2007, Birmingham

(1) It was agreed that Mrs P Draycott and Rabbi Cohen would represent SACRE at the Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, 8 May 2007 at Birmingham.

(2) Rabbi Cohen agreed to be nominated as an Executive Committee Member.

6. Bi-Annual RE Awards - Strategy Group Report

(1) Mr Bristow confirmed that St Gabriel's Trust had agreed to offer a one off contribution of £1,000 for the award, so therefore other contributions would be needed to fully fund the next round of the Biennial Awards. Mr Horne and Mr Lancaster thanked Mr Bristow for his efforts.

(2) Mr Jones also thanked Mr Bristow but questioned the fairness of awarding £600 at secondary level and £400 at primary level. He would have preferred to see £500 each. He then referred to County Council Members being allocated £10,000 to spend as they wish and providing officers sanctioned it, he would donate £1,000 for the 2007/08 financial year. Mr Dance and Mr Horne were also supportive but emphasised that specific criteria applied to the use of the funding. Mr Bristow welcomed the pledges of support and suggested that rather than agree ratios at the moment it would be better to see how much is available for the award after contributions have been made. He also felt that St Gabriel's might be prepared to make future contributions if it saw the County Council being prepared to offer its own financial support.

(3) RESOLVED that a group, consisting of Mrs Corbyn, Mr Lancaster, Miss Kelvie and Mrs Watts be set up to work on specific proposals.

7. Overview of National and Local Developments

(1) Mrs Draycott spoke about REact – Sikhism Transition Unit publication and confirmed that resource focusing on this item was on its way.

(2) Mrs Draycott reported on the CFE External Conference Report on Strong SACREs produced by Mrs Miller. A paper regarding this item had been circulated to

Members with the agenda. Mr Bristow thanked Mrs Miler and Mrs Draycott for this item.

(3) Mrs Draycott referred to the QCA Curriculum Review: Response from SACRE paper which had been circulated to Members with the agenda. She advised the Members that they had the opportunity to respond as individuals by 30 April 2007 but that she would also put together a SACRE response following consultation with Mr Bristow. This was agreed by the Members. Mrs Draycott also explained that the implications for the agreed syllabus were minimal as Kent's views are similar to that of the QCA's. Mr Bristow thanked Mrs Draycott and invited comments from the Members. There were none offered.

(4) Introduction of the Agreed Syllabus to Kent Schools. Mrs Draycott referred to the sort of issues being raised by the schools and that these would be followed up where help was requested. Mr Foster reported that the overwhelming feedback received had been a positive response for the new syllabus. He also reported that private sector representatives from outside Kent schools had attended the sessions and had requested copies of the syllabus. Mr Platnauer asked whether there were any financial implications affecting schools receiving extra resources and asked whether training would be available. Mr Foster replied that he was not aware of resources not being supplied and that training sessions were also well subscribed. He reported that there were two types of course. One for the headteachers and governors and one for co-ordinating teachers. Both had been well supported and there had positive feedback. He did advise that there was no extra funding available.

(5) Faith response in the event of a Major Emergency – 26 June 2007. Mr Foster referred to this item and informed SACRE that volunteers were invited to become involved in this. He requested that anyone interested should contact the Clerk to the SACRE, Mrs C Wade.

8. Dates of future SACRE meetings:

(1) Thursday, 12 July 2007 – change of date – Thanet and District Reform Synagogue. (Ms Thornewell asked about supply cover and Mrs Miller agreed this).

(2) Friday, 2 November 2007 – Sessions House, Maidstone – Guest Speaker Dr Mark Chater QCA

(3) Tuesday, 11 March 2008 – Sessions House, Maidstone.

(4) Wednesday, 9 July 2008 – venue to be confirmed.

(5) Thursday, 6 November 2008 – Sessions House, Maidstone – Guest Speaker – Mr Inderjit Singh.

9. Member Presentation - Rajvinder Singh Gill

(1) Mr Singh-Gill's informative and enjoyable presentation was well received by the SACRE Members.

(2) Mr Bristow thanked Mr Singh-Gill on behalf of the Members.