

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)
Town Hall, Romford
Wednesday 7 November 2012 (7.00pm – 8.20pm)**

**Representing other
Christian and religious
denominations
(Group A)**

Mrs Pamela Coles
Om Dhir
Dr John Lester
Sansar Narwal
Christine Seymour
Kevin Walsh

**Representing the
Church of England
(Group B)**

Mrs Susan Freeman

**Representing the
Teaching Profession
(Group C)**

Mrs Anne Masters
Ms Linda Munday
Mr Keith Shurlock
Mr Nick Hills

**Representing the
Local Authority
Councillors
(Group D)**

Gillian Ford
Damian White

Councillor Wendy Brice-Thompson (Observer) and Mrs Judith Payne (HSIS – Primary Advisor) were also present.

57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & NEW OR SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS:

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Alison Seaman, Mr Daniel Hugill (Secondary Advisor) and Councillors Paul Rochford and Pam Light. There were no substitutions. The clerk said that as there were some members who had not attended for some time and had not sent apologies, he would make enquiries to see whether there were communication problems or about their continued membership.

58. MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING:

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2012 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

Dr Lester reminded members that the Revd Laut had asked for as many faiths as possible to be represented at the “Light up a Life” celebration which was to take place on the Green at Havering-atte-Bower in December and said that it would be good for members to support it if possible.

59. UPDATE ON SCHOOL ACTIVITY:

Primary:

Mrs Payne opened her report by saying that training for RE co-ordinators that term had been very well received with 30 schools represented. Fiona Moss, a member of the RE Today Services Advisory Team, explored Islam and Judaism with reference to the Havering Schemes of work. She addressed practical ways of learning about and from Islam and Judaism, improving teachers’ and co-ordinators’ subject knowledge and providing a variety of engaging and effective strategies for learning about and from these religions. Resources and ideas were shared which supported creative,

visual, active and enquiry-based learning.

Training for RE co-ordinators continued with the next session planned for Wednesday 23 January 1.30pm at CEME. Stephen Moss, a member of the RE Today Services Advisory Team, will explore Hinduism and Christianity with reference to the Havering Schemes of work. She encouraged members to attend and contribute.

Freedom of Information Requests (Fol)

Mrs Payne said that she had responded to a Fol request from The Mail on Sunday newspaper in July relating to:-

- Requests to change religions status of schools
- Enquiries about worship

In October she responded to a further Fol request about any applications to change religious nature and, in particular, any requests to change to Islam or secular. A nil return was submitted.

She reported that SACRE's budget for 2013 had been confirmed and, with the addition of unspent funds now amounted to £2,203.00. She felt this this would be ample to provide for courses and some limited expenses as well as paying for some resources and the Michael Edwards' trophy. With regards resources, she asked for permission to pay £115.00 subscription to RE Today as it was a very useful tool and the subscription would permit on-line access.

Secondary:

Due to his presence at an RE Council Extraordinary General Meeting, Mr Hugill's report on the Secondary sector would be given at the next meeting.

60. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN R.E.:

Although Mr Hugill was at an RE Council Extraordinary General Meeting concerning the RE Council Review of RE, he had submitted a written report concerning:

1. NATRE Survey in the effect of the EBacc
2. RE Council Review of RE
3. Ofsted Subject Report

1. NATRE Survey on the EBacc (2012)

The NATRE survey 2012 into the effects of the EBacc had been published. The survey received coverage in the Telegraph, TES, Church Times, Methodist Recorder and other publications. It had also led to questions being raised in the House of Lords.

The key findings were:

- 33% of schools reported that legal requirements* were not being met in key stage 4 (an increase of 5% on 2011)
- 24% of schools reported a reduction in the number of specialist staff employed to teach RE for 2012/2013 and 82% of these reported that the

introduction of the EBacc was the main reason for this change (a 27% reduction in specialist staff was reported for 2011/2012)

- 54% of schools reported that they would have no entries for GCSE Short Course in 2014; a rise of 12% over two years
- 63% of schools that reported a drop in Full Course entries cited the EBacc as the main reason (55% in 2011)
- 20% of schools reported that they were trying to deliver the GCSE RS in less than the recommended teaching time. There was a growing body of evidence, from Ofsted subject surveys that this practice was detrimental to students' RE
- 71% of schools reported that they had received no subject specific training in school in the 2011/12 academic year; 44% reported that they had received no subject specific training outside of school. Just over 10% reported that they had attended two days or more of training outside of school.

There was clearly a good deal for SACRE to consider as it considers its role in supporting RE in the borough's schools. Mr Hugill invited SACRE to consider what measures could be taken to slow these trends in Havering.

2. RE Council Review of Religious Education

The Expert Panel would be publishing its Phase 1 report on 7th November. There would be one month for consultation and that consultation would affect the way that Phase 2 would be organised. The report was to be published on the REC website: www.religiouseducationcouncil.org

Mr Hugill invited members of SACRE to consider submitting individual responses as well as a collective one. He stated that he would e-mail members after the publication of the report to seek their views and see whether SACRE wished to make its own submission.

3. Ofsted

The Ofsted report into RE (published every three years) was due for publication before the end of the year.

Local News

Mr Hugill stated that he had received an e-mail from Nigel Franceschi, Deputy Head at Abbs Cross Academy and Arts College concerning the Agreed Syllabus. He directed him to Mrs Payne in order to obtain a copy of the AS and he asked Mr Franceschi to pass his details to his RE staff. Mr Hugill concluded his report by saying that he would be following up this contact later in the Autumn term.

The Chairman proposed a vote of thanks for the work both Mr Hugill and Mrs Payne were doing on behalf of promoting RE not only across the borough but nationally as well. Members present fully supported the sentiment.

61. THE MICHAEL EDWARDS' AWARD:

The Chairman reported that the Presentation of the award to Ravenscourt School had finally taken place on 26 October. It had been a very busy day for the school as it coincided with the Harvest Festival celebration and a visit to the school by Andrew Rosindell, MP for Romford.

The Chairman added that she would be writing to the academies to inform them that they were still eligible to contend for the Michael Edwards' Award and invite them to do so. She would also promote the Agreed Syllabus as a successful and highly regarded teaching resource.

Members asked whether Mr Hugill could provide them with a report about the prospect of SACRE having any prospect of making a positive contribution to RE within the academies.

A member asked whether the ME Award ought not to be extended to the borough's independent / faith schools (such as Immanuel in North Romford) as the change in status of the borough's senior schools from maintained to academy appeared to make the original restrictions redundant. The Chairman agreed that it would be perverse to ignore them and asked for contact details to be provided so that she could write to them as well.

It was suggested that the approach should be to the heads of RE and copied to the head teachers as that was more likely to reach a more receptive audience.

62. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Dr Lester reminded members that Langton's was putting on a presentation for Interfaith Week.

There was a suggestion that perhaps SACRE should have a presentation from an OfSTED inspector at the next meeting. Mr Hugill should be contacted and asked if he knew anyone who would be willing to attend.

Mr Walsh took the opportunity to remind members of his one man show "Voices for Christmas" which would be taking place on Wednesday and Thursday 12 and 13 December at St. Luke's Church, Front Lane, Cranham.

63. FUTURE DATES:

Members decided that the next meeting (to be held in the Town Hall commencing at 7.00pm) should be scheduled for **Thursday 14 March 2013** and that the external visit should be booked for **6 June 2013** and that Mrs Seymour would make arrangements for the Humanists to provide a venue and an insight into their world view.