

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**

**Engayne Primary School, Upminster
Tuesday 19 June 2012 (6.15pm – 8.25pm)**

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

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

**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

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

Gillian Ford
Pam Light
Paul McGeary
Damian White+

+ For part of the meeting.

Mrs Judith Payne (HSIS – Primary Advisor), Mr Daniel Hugill (Secondary Advisor) and Councillor Wendy Brice-Thompson (Observer) were also present, as was the Revd. Graham Laut (Senior Chaplain at St. Francis Hospice, North Romford).

SACRE had been invited to Engayne Primary School and had enjoyed an informative and entertaining presentation of how RE was being delivered and its significance within the curriculum and for pupils given by the school's Head of RE Rob Field. The Chairman thanked him on behalf of those present.

48. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & NEW OR SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS:

Apologies for absence were received from, Mr Kamal Siddiqui, Mrs Alison Seaman, Mr Kevin Walsh and Councillor Paul Rochford. There were no substitutions.

49. MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING:

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2012 were agreed and signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising.

50. ADDRESS BY THE REVD. GRAHAM LAUT:

Revd. Laut informed SACRE that the hospice had been providing palliative care for 28 years. He had been a vicar in Collier Row before becoming involved with the hospice. Today there were 19 in-patients and nine "residents". He said that he was sure members would be aware of the outreach the hospice was involved with in the local community, but possibly not that their work stretched from Barking to Brentwood and Ingatestone.

He explained that he was part of a small pastoral team and part of the team's remit was to provide spiritual support when patients moved back into the community. He said that the hospice catered for all faiths and added that although when started five people each contributed £5.00, it now cost around £7.8 million a year to run.

He invited members to the "Light up a Life" service which would be held around Christmas, possibly on the Green at Havering village (weather permitting)!

Revd. Laut told SACRE that the Pastoral Team – comprising three members – was looking for volunteer chaplains to share the work. In answer to a question from Councillor Light, he said that the team would very much like to "grow" the number of volunteers from other faiths. He said that whilst most patients were Christian (principally C-of-E) the hospice did receive patients from other faiths – it had cared for one or two Jewish patients. He said it would be good to be able to offer spiritual support to those of other persuasions (and Christine Seymour had offered her support for Humanists and those of no religious belief)

A more general discussion of the role of hospices ensued in which members considered how best to provide support for the dying without appearing intrusive. Revd. Laut said that the hospice had a well stocked library with different religious texts available. It also had a chapel which had been designed to be spiritually neutral in order to accommodate different faiths (or be a place of quiet contemplation for those with none).

The clerk asked whether SACRE could help point volunteers towards the hospice and Christine Seymour said that Brentwood had a new Buddhist centre and there was a Hindu temple in Noak Hill, whilst Dr Lester said that the Baha'i faith would be willing to help. There were though no Zoroastrians practicing in Romford. The clerk asked whether SACRE wanted to establish stronger links with the hospice and this appeared to be the consensus of those present. It was also suggested that – through the work of Mrs Payne and Mr Hugill – the work (and needs) of the hospice could be promoted through Havering's schools.

The Chairman thanked Revd. Laut for his presentation and the information he had provided about the hospice and asked for more information which could be distributed to all SACRE members.

51. UPDATE ON SCHOOL ACTIVITY:

Primary:

Mrs Payne stated that the Engayne Primary School application for teaching status had been successful. Three further school-to-school partnerships were being developed within Havering Primary schools. She said that her role in the borough was to ensure that those partnerships included one-to-one coaching of teaching and leadership in RE. In May, there had been another Freedom of Information request (from the Daily Mail). She wondered whether SACRE's work could be advertised in "*Living*" and suggested that perhaps the magazine could produce an article on the hospice as well.

She was pleased to announce that funding came from the Funding Forum and the work was led and monitored by a strategy group of Headteachers supported by Havering

School Improvement Service (Hsis).

Training for RE co-ordinators continued and the session in March shared Engayne's RE curriculum, teaching strategies and approach to pupil voice. Materials were well received from Robin Field and Engayne Primary with thanks from the co-ordinators. As well as addressing individual co-ordinators' needs, the session would be covering the requirements of the New Inspection Framework. Mrs Payne added that training was proving to be a worry as it was becoming difficult to attract delegates. Only eight people turned up for the April session. She was hopeful that the next session (set for the end of June) would be better supported.

Secondary:

Mr Hugill reported on the following activities:-

Survey EBacc 2012

The NATRE survey 2012 had been launched – influential in first phase (2011) Newspapers, TV, radio, Ministers had been lobbied. 50% of all schools had responded (100s per half hour at one point). He urged members to chase anyone they knew who worked in a secondary schools to become involved as some people needed more than one reminder. He also invited members to become involved in this task urgently as there were only five weeks of the consultation period left. The Executive would then spend the summer analyzing the data.

The All Party Parliamentary Group

The APPG had been launched at the House of Commons the previous week and two of his students had been present. The students spoke with Peers, Ministers, and Members of Parliament about the nature of RE and encouraged them to support the work of the APPG. Their presence was very much valued by those with whom they spoke.

Mr Hugill suggested that the Chair write to the borough's MPs to encourage them to join the Group. This would also be an opportunity to make them aware of SACRE's work (Mr Gove recently asked about SACREs and didn't know what they were). He felt that it was clear there was still some educating to do. He wondered whether it would be possible to publish a feature in "*Living*" as this could provide wider education about RE for the local community.

National Curriculum review update

The new National Curriculum for the English, Maths and Science curriculum had now been published and was available on the DfE website, and – he added - we now entered a period of consultation.

Levels of attainment (Levels 1-8) had been removed (these levels appear in Havering's Agreed Syllabus), but Ministers insist it would be left to teachers who might use them anyway. This would remain an issue for OfSTED to deal with. This would be something that the RE Council Review of RE would be considering in the coming months.

The new curricular for English, Maths and Science outlined very detailed content.

Other non-core subjects would not necessarily have this detail provided for them and as RE was a non-core subject, what would it have? This would be something to be considered by the RE Council Review of RE.

Mr Hugill said that it was also interesting to note that Labour was also conducting a parallel process and that he would be speaking to them the following Monday on behalf of NATRE.

52. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN R.E.:

RE

The RE Council had appointed Dr Janet Orchard (Mr Hugill's supervisor at University) as Lead for RE Council Review of RE in England and Wales. She will lead a panel of four experts. The Review had been launched on Monday 18 June and it would be published in due course. This Panel would help guide the Review alongside Dr Orchard

OfSTED

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development (SMSC):

The feedback from the schools inspected so far had been seen as very important.

Report:

Robin Field from Engayne had mentioned the last Ofsted RE report – 'Transforming RE'. This three-yearly report was due out at the end of the year. Mr Hugill advised members to watch out for it as it could appear slightly early. Some of the issues that Mr Field had identified were at the forefront of OfSTED's thinking too.

- Progression/assessment
- Christianity (esp. in primaries)

NATRE

NATRE had written to Mr Gove to request further help for SACREs. His argument was that RE did not need to be in EBacc as it would be compulsory. He was keen to deflect RE back to the localities – perhaps without guaranteeing support for SACREs. Mr Gove had also been asked by NATRE to provide guidance on who was responsible for inspecting SACREs and Agreed Syllabuses.

NATRE had commented on the monitoring role of SACRE which was becoming more and more difficult due to lack of content in Section 5 inspections.

Mr Hugill concluded by saying that there were numerous issues to bear in mind as SACRE approached the time for deciding whether the AS needed to be reviewed, and if it was, then making arrangements for convening an AS Conference would need to be considered.

Members thanked Mr Hugill for the detail of his report and there ensued a general discussion about the changes to the way in which education – including the

examination process - was changing and several members expressed concerns that the government views being presented did not offer much comfort in respect of providing moral and spiritual grounding for the next generation of pupils. What would be the impact on society in the future?

53. THE MICHAEL EDWARDS' AWARD:

The Chairman said that she had added a picture to the Annual Report and asked members whether SACRE ought to think about how to encourage participation in the Michael Edwards Award in the future as participation recently had not been exactly robust. She was concerned that with the change of senior schools to academy status, the link would be broken and this would be a shame. Members considered that every effort should be made to ensure that it continued to be open to senior schools and it was proposed that the award should be made available to all (full time) schools including the Pupil Referral Units.

54. SACRE'S ANNUAL REPORT:

The Annual Report for 2011/12 was presented to Members and SACRE accepted it without change and recommended that it be presented to Council and published.

55. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

- Mrs Payne said that she was pleased to be able to inform the Council that the Local Authority had honoured its commitment to support the work of SACRE.
- Dr Lester informed those present that the production of an Interfaith newsletter was ready for publication and it would be good to receive something from SACRE.
- With regard to the photo being used in the Annual Report, the Chairman was pleased to confirm that the parents of the children shown had given their consent to publication.
- Members expressed concerns that SACRE's base was beginning to appear narrow and the Chair invited members to see if they could see whether representatives from a wider range of religious faiths practicing in Havering could be encouraged to consider either full membership of SACRE or come as observers.

56. FUTURE DATES:

Members decided that the next meeting (to be held in the Town Hall) should be scheduled for **Wednesday 7 November 2012**