

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
07 JULY 2011 (1915 to 2030)

PRESENT: Mr David Crispin, Consultant

Group A

P Kendrick, S Sheikh, M Freedman, B Singh and W Doris.

Group B

None

Group C

None

Group D

Councillor Laxmi Attawar, Councillor Nick Draper and
Councillor Miles Windsor

Officers

Penny Garry (Business Support, CSF)

Apologies for absence were received from: Ms A King, Ms H Fahey, Mr C Powell, Reverend R Skinner, Mr N McManus, Ms K Seamer

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda item 1)

No declarations were made

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2011 (Agenda item 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 January were unavailable at the time of this meeting and will be forwarded when available.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR (Agenda items 4 and 5)

As the meeting was not quorate this would be undertaken at the next meeting in November.

INTRO TO DAVID CRISPIN (Agenda item 6a)

Mr Crispin introduced himself and described his background as a teacher and RE advisor (having worked for the ILEA for some years) and latterly as an independent consultant and advisor also working for Sutton SACRE.

ANNUAL REPORT 2009/2010 (Agenda item 6)

There was discussion around publication of the annual report. Was published on the Merton public website and previously sent to the QCDA which no longer exists. SACRE may be asked to send to the DfE. NASACRE are keen to receive them Reports have been slimmed down.

SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2010/2011 (Agenda item 7)

Mr Crispin asked if a SACRE member could contribute a small piece about themselves, why they attend SACRE and how they see its role. Cllr Nick Draper agreed to do this David/Peter will draft the next report and send out for comments before the next SACRE meeting.

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PLACES OF WORSHIP Update (Agenda item 8)

Peter Kendrick phoned MVSC to discuss the best way to avoid duplication in producing the Places of Worship booklet. They have told Peter Kendrick that they do not have an ongoing budget to produce the "Faith in Merton" booklet (Mr Sheikh advised that the money given to do this was through the Prevention of Extremism fund). It was suggested by Mr Freedman that in future it would be better to have this information publicised and accessible on the web perhaps in the format of a database to make it easy for people to search for a particular place of worship, location and transport links etc.

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN RE

Mr Kendrick had attended a NASACRE conference. The main message was SACREs and Young People, but a very concerning issue dealt with was that the White Paper for Schools has not included RE in the EBac although the government state that it is still statutory.

RE also did not appear on Primary Schools curriculum consultation.

The Keynote speaker was Dr Robert Beckford who outlined the fact that the coalition government seems to quote Saul Alinsky a lot. Saul Alinsky's big theme was "deconstruction" and "re-construction".

The three main threats to RE were: EBac, Academies and Curriculum Development.

EBac - is promoting History and Geography above RE even though Religious Studies is proving popular.

Academies now have no statutory requirement to provide RE in the curriculum. Although the funding agreements does require RE provision.

Curriculum Development – still waiting for decisions to be made.

NATRE Survey - 1,918 schools returned the survey (53%). Main themes emerging are that less time is being given to RE at Key Stage 3 and, therefore, primary schools are not keen to spend time teaching RE.

RE teachers are losing their jobs and the availability of course of study for potential RE teachers is diminishing.

The government state that if a petition receives over 110,000 signatures it will be considered – the recent petition for RE to remain in schools has received over 130,000 and there has been an Early Day motion – 90 MPs signatures.

Mr Kendrick had written to Stephen Hammond, Wimbledon MP for comments on this subject. Councillor Nick Draper suggested that the Mitcham & Morden MP should also be written to. Councillor Miles Windsor felt that politics should be kept aside from this meeting. However, it was felt by some members that there was no intention to discuss individual party politics but being that the government is the main decision making body in the future of RE, their policies should be discussed.

There were some positives – there had been a Celebrating RE Month in March and over 100 schools took part.

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AGREED SYLLABUS (Agenda item 10)

The law requires that it is reviewed every 5 years which would mean it is due in 2013. In the current uncertain climate review will be left until the situation is clearer.

David Crispin mentioned the Hampshire syllabus as a good example – it is conceptually based.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS (Agenda item 11)

These were noted:

Tuesday 29th November 2011

Wednesday 8th February 2012

It was decided that if there are any major developments then an extra meeting may need to be called.