

Standing Advisory Council For Religious Education

held on Monday 9 July 2007 at 5.30 p.m.

at the Salvation Army Citadel, Green Lane, Walsall

Present

Councillor Ault
Councillor Turner
Mrs. S. Blackmore
Mrs. P.M. Davies
Mrs. M. Gibbons
Major Stubbings
Barbara Groombridge
Mr. M. Sacha
Mr. K. Yeates
Mrs. L. Edwards

Members were informed that the meeting was at present inquorate and it was agreed that the presentation by Mr. Sacha on Islam be heard at this point.

Mr. Sacha put on a display of religious books and artefacts; he recited the some words from the Quran, the words were used in the five daily prayers and were spoken in Arabic. Pictures showing the holy city of Madinah, the Dome of Rock in Jerusalem, the holy city of Makkah and the door was the entrance door to the holy Kahbah.

Mr. Sacha referred to the Muslim way of greeting people in Islam. The Quran was written in Arabic, but there were translations in English.

The word "Islam" meant submission and derived from the word meaning "peace" and in a religious context it meant complete submission to the will of god. Half of the faith related to cleanliness and all other things around us in life; it was our duty to look after neighbours, regardless of their religion and being honest was crucial in this.

The six articles of faith were:

- (1) Belief in Allah
- (2) Belief in angels
- (3) Belief in the books (scriptures) of Allah
- (4) Belief in the prophets of Allah
- (5) Belief in the day of judgement
- (6) Belief in the divine laws

The five pillars of Islam were the five main duties a Muslim had to perform:

- (1) Shahadah – the belief in Allah and the messengers of Allah
- (2) Alaah - daily prayers

- (3) Paying of Zakh
- (4) Fasting in Ramadhan
- (5) Performing the pilgrimage to Makkah

The five obligatory prayers were:

- (1) Fajr – early morning prayer, begins at dawn and ends just before sunrise
- (2) Zuhr – midday, between 1.00 p.m. to 1.30 p.m.
- (3) Asr – mid-afternoon – 7.00 p.m.
- (4) Maghrib – immediately after sunset
- (5) Isha – approximately 11.00 p.m.

During Ramadhan, fasting took place from sunrise to sunset and children from the age of 10 were encouraged to take part in fasting, although from maturity it becomes an obligation. The fast was broken with dates and water and the family communication get together in the mosque. Ramadhan was the month of cleanliness and during that period, in particular, extra thought was given to the poor and the needy. Zakah means to purify oneself and 2.5% of a persons total wealth was given to charity for the needy. During Ramadhan, people visit mosques more often and are reminded to cleanse their bodies and minds, to give to charity and the needy, heart, body and mind would be surrendered to the faith and the fast must end at a particular given moment in the day and you must eat. Any person exempt from fasting, for example, through illness or pregnancy, they would have to pay approximately £3 to the charity.

Hajj, this is the house of god in Makkah in the holy city of Madinah and anyone who is wealthy enough to visit, it is their obligation to do so once in their lifetime, although those who could not make the trip through illness or financial reasons would not be committing a sin. The people that have made the trip are known as Hajj's, this year approximately 5 million people attended and the event was hosted by Saudi Arabian Government who were the custodians of the two mosques and all the health and safety aspects are built into the area.

The Imam would lead the congregation.

In Jerusalem Al-Aqsa was the third most sacred place on the world and was the third holy shrine. Although it was not obligation to visit Al-Aqsa, it was a requirement and Muslims were recommended that they visit the Dome of Rock in their lifetime.

SACRE thanked Mr. Sacha for the informative presentation.

In response to points raised by members, Mr. Sacha introduced Mr. Aslam who had lived in Walsall for 46 years, he worked for charities and been involved in the Health Service and was recently awarded the MBE.

At this juncture, the meeting became quorate.

Appointment of Chairman

Resolved

That Mrs. M. Gibbons be appointed Chairman of SACRE for the current municipal year.

Appointment of Vice-Chairman

Resolved

That the appointment of Vice-Chairman be deferred to the next meeting.

Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Cassidy, Cook, K. Phillips and Rochelle and Mr. Hopkins, Pastor B. Powell, Father J. Nankivell and Ms. L. Hassell.

Mr. Taylor informed SACRE that he had received Janet Boden's resignation from her post as Advanced Skills Teacher and it was thought that she may have retired from teaching.

Resolved

That a letter of thanks be forwarded to Janet Boden on behalf of SACRE to recognise the work and assistance she had given to SACRE during her term of office.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 12 March 2007 were submitted.

(see annexed).

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2007 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Late items introduced by the Chairman

There were no late items.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985

There were no items for consideration in private session.

Presentation to next meeting

Mr. Sacha suggested that a presentation be given by a member of the Shree Ram Mandir Temple, Ford Street, Pleck to the meeting to be held on 14 November 2007.

Election of spokespersons for groups

Resolved

That this item be deferred to the next meeting in view of the poor level of attendance by the groups.

Appointment of members of the Strategy Sub-Group

The report of Constitutional Services was submitted:

(see annexed)

Resolved

(1) That the following persons be appointed to the Strategy Sub-Group:

Mr. K. Yeates – Teacher representative
Mrs. S. Blackmore – Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education representative
Councillor K. Phillips – Local education authority representative
Mrs. P. Davies – Christian and other religious dominations representative

(2) That the Chair attend the meeting as an ex-officio member.

Draft annual report

The draft annual report was submitted:

(see annexed)

Mr. Taylor referred to items within the report that required further information from members in order that it can be included in the report.

A statement from SACRE was required with regard to advice that it had provided to the local authority and arrangements for training for members of SACRE.

The Strategy Sub-Group would, at a future meeting, confirm its 5 year development plan, this would be impacted on by the self evaluation.

SACRE would be required to produce a financial plan for 2007/8 and the following would need to be taken into consideration:

- Funding for a regional conference
- Planning on the work required for the provision of a revised agreed syllabus
- NASACRE conference and costs to include a keynote speaker

With regard to the letter from the Chairman to accompany the annual plan, it would be necessary to show:

- More faiths attending the meeting
- Becoming a good SACRE
- Promoting religious education

Resolved

That members be requested to forward the information requested to Constitutional Services in order that the relevant information, to be included in the annual plan, could be collated and forwarded to Education Walsall.

Monitoring of the use of Agreed Syllabus in schools

The report was submitted:

(see annexed)

Resolved

- (1) That the protocols for the visits to schools as set out in the notes of the sub-groups (Appendix 1) of the annexed report be agreed;
- (2) That the training session for those members who expressed an interest in taking part in the visits to schools take place on Tuesday 11 September 2007 at 4.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. in a Conference Room at the Council House, Walsall.
- (3) That CRB checks be undertaken on those members taking part in the visits.

Proposed local conference/seminar

Mr. Taylor informed SACRE that Jan Roman of the Black Country Children's School Improvement Partnership would be happy to facilitate a local conference and it was anticipated that funding towards the costs could be provided from within the Black Country Challenge.

Mr. Taylor undertook to contact Ms. Roman to obtain information on other local authorities representatives within the Black Country to establish who would be interested in attending a local conference. It was anticipated that work relating to keynote speakers and an itinerary would commence in October 2007.

Details relating to financial support required for the keynote speakers and the conference should be established by September 2007. Education Walsall had undertaken to assist with the distribution of leaflets, publicity and other administrative costs. Attendance at the conference would involve a fee and a realistic fee would need to be calculated. It was expected that SACRE members from the Black Country, teachers and representatives from the Social, Emotional Attitudes to Leaving (SEAL) would be invited.

Resolved

- (1) That members provide information relating to possible keynote speakers for the conference to Constitutional Services by September in order that approaches could be made to book the keynote speaker, the speech to relate to “religious education in faiths”.
- (2) That SACRE note progress on the conference to date and that the sub-group be requested to estimate costs involved in the conference and report back to SACRE at its next meeting.

Statutory inspection of Anglican schools/Section 48

The reports of the National Society in respect of following were submitted:

- (a) Holy Trinity CE (C) Primary School;
- (b) Cooper and Jordan CE (VA) Primary School;
- (c) Rosedale CE (VC) Infant School.

(see annexed)

Mrs. Blackmore enlarged on the content of the reports.

Resolved

That the reports in respect of the statutory inspection of Anglican schools (Section 48) with regard to Holy Trinity CE (C) Primary School, Cooper and Jordan CE (VA) Primary School and Rosedale CE (VC) Infant School be noted and that letters of congratulations be forward to the schools in recognition of both Holy Trinity and Cooper and Jordan achieving “outstanding” and Rosedale achieving “good”.

Dates of future meetings

The report of Constitutional Services was submitted:

(see annexed)

Resolved

- (1) That SACRE agree to hold meetings for the coming year as follows:

Wednesday 14 November 2007

Monday 10 March 2008

Monday 7 July 2008

- (2) That the meetings be held at the Salvation Army Citadel, Green Lane, Walsall, commencing at 5.30 p.m.

SACRE self evaluation

The report of Constitutional Services was submitted:

(see annexed)

Resolved

- (1) That SACRE authorise the Strategy Sub-Group to consider the progress of SACRE against the self evaluation toolkit previously approved and to report the progress to SACRE at its next meeting.
- (2) That members of SACRE be invited to attend the Strategy Sub-Group meeting on 16 July 2007 from 4.30 to 6.30 p.m. at Pleck Methodist Church, Bescot Road, Walsall, to assist with the self evaluation.

Standing item – Budgetary requirements for 2007/8

SACRE noted that this matter had been considered earlier in the meeting when the proposed local conference/seminar was considered.

Termination of meeting

The meeting terminated at 7.30 p.m.