

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
28th June 2023
Report of the Director for Children and Families
An Update on Key Issues

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To present members of SACRE with a brief update on key issues that have developed or arisen since the last meeting of SACRE.

2 Summary

2.1 Members of SACRE will receive a brief report on a number of key issues. These are matters which have either been raised at previous SACRE meetings and which have moved forward or matters on which it is appropriate to brief members of SACRE.

3 Recommendation

3.1 That members of SACRE receive the report and note the contents

4 Background

4.1 Since the spring term meeting of the SACRE there have been developments in a number of areas which had previously been agenda items for SACRE or which have local or national importance for RE.

4.2 Members will be briefed on these key developments.

5 Equal Opportunities

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

6 Financial implications

6.1 Financial implications may be raised; These have been dealt with elsewhere or will be raised at future meetings of SACRE.

Contact Officer

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Key Issues Report

i) Advisor

Mary Gale for several years has been commissioned by SCC through its trading arm called ENTRUST to support the Staffordshire SACRE which has included the revision of the Agreed Syllabus.

This commission was reviewed for the financial year 2023-2024 for the commission to start on April 1st, 2023. Entrust and SCC indicated their wish for this commission to continue. Mary Gale has agreed to this and is offering ongoing support to schools and SACRE

ii) RE Agreed Syllabus (AS) Launch

On the afternoon of February 27th, 2023, the revised Staffordshire RE Agreed Syllabus was launched at the Entrust headquarters in Stafford. The launch was a free event. It was well attended with over 120 schools represented. SACRE members, Headteachers, RE leads, Trustees, CEOs and SCC representatives were present at the event.

We were very grateful to those who managed to give up their valuable time to attend the event and support. Sean Miles, a member of our SACRE and Headteacher from St Luks's CE VC Primary school in Cannock, brought along his choir to sing to open the event- this was well received and set the scene for the launch. There were keynote speeches from Tim Moss, the SCC Assistant Director for Education Strategy & Improvement, and our chair Preb. Michael Metcalf. A letter of support was read out from Councillor Price, who was unable to attend. In addition, the Minority Ethnic Achievement Service (MEAS) gave a summary presentation of their contribution regarding the workshops connected with the AS.

A practising teacher (Fay Cox) from a middle school gave a presentation on how her school will be addressing the requirements of the revised AS.

In addition, Mary Gale demonstrated the main changes of the AS and the statutory requirements from September 2023.

Delegates received a 'goody bag' which included a copy of the revised syllabus to take away with them- either a paper copy or a digital copy on a memory stick along with publication information from various RE associations.

The feedback after the event was extremely positive. Many schools requested additional information, including additional examples of planning for the spring and summer terms. This was provided in draft format on request.

Special schools were complimentary about the information provided for them. Such was their interest that this resulted in face-to-face visits to provide extra support from Mary Gale. Additional visits of this nature will continue throughout the summer term. A webinar presentation was also provided on Ofsted requirements for Special schools which included RE aspects.

Mary has also provided similar information, which was presented at the lunch, at the local National Association Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) virtual meetings, thus supporting those who were unable to attend the launch. Again, this was a free virtual meeting.

Schools will be reminded once again of the need- if a statutory requirement- to follow the AS from this September onwards. This information will be provided via the headteacher's e- bag and via the autumn term Governor Information Pack.

This information will be provided by Mary ready for September.

iii) Continuous Professional Development

Mary Gale continues to support RE leaders in several schools through email, virtual meetings and face to face meetings. This has involved supporting schools in understanding how to implement the revised Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus from September 2023

Planning support is needed most. Mary has revised much of the planning to support schools including planning for special schools and middle schools for learners in KS 3.

Entrust commissioned Mary Gale to run a face-to-face early summer course in June 2023 at Entrust. Four schools only booked onto this course. The course therefore was cancelled. Mary also provided support for schools who wish to carry out RE focus day, providing hints and tips and a schedule for the day. Some of this advice included (if funds allow) a visit to the Open Centre-Faith Trail in Derby. Two schools followed this advice and reported that this had been an inspirational focus visit day and suited learners of all ages. For those schools who could not afford a visit to Derby, they arranged for speakers from The Open Centre to visit them to support learning. This was more cost effective.

Governors and Trustees received information on RE in the summer 2023 Governor Information Pack (GIP) this included the status of the Agreed Syllabus. They have been encouraged to continue to work in their link governor roles to discuss the forthcoming revised Agreed Syllabus implementation. This information reached 300 plus schools and over 200 leaders, including governance professionals from a variety of schools- both maintained and academies. This information was presented through webinars led by Mary and a face-to-face meeting at the training centre at the Entrust offices. This information was well received once again.

This support will continue into the autumn term as Mary has been asked once again to produce the GIP general compliance document.

Mary attended virtual meetings of the West Midlands Association of Religious Education Inspectors and Advisors and Consultants (AREIAC) and a local National association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) online meeting on 6th and 14th March 2023 and recently on 12th June 2023.

Discussions centred around resources, the national plan for RE and the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus.

Mary attended the NASACRE conference with the Chair in May 2023- see agenda item 7 for a report on this.

iv) Westhill Legacy project- Explore, Engage, Reflect (EER) in conjunction with Youth Net.

SACRE have continued to fund this project from the 2022-2023 budget through commissioning the Entrust Minority Ethnic Achievement Service- MEAS- to deliver workshops in conjunction with YouthNet.

The dates for the Spring term 2023 included:

- Monday 6th Feb at Springhead Primary at Talks Pitts
- Monday 6th March at Ravensmead at Bignall End
- Wednesday April 27th 2023 St Mary's Mucklestone
- Tuesday April 16th Walton Priory Middle school Stone

We are waiting for the date to support Baldwins Gate CE VC Primary school.

Seven additional schools in the Newcastle area have been contacted and we are awaiting their replies.

Mary attended the workshops on April 27th at St Mary's Mucklestone and spoke to learners and staff and governors. They all agreed that workshops such as these had a positive impact on all. The learners were already very aware of RE associated with Christianity and were able therefore to ask insightful questions regarding Islam and what it means to be a Muslim in Britain this century.

Here is a flavour of the feedback received.

- *Very interesting content, well delivered.*
- *Children highly engaged and provoked good questioning.*
- *Just the right amount of content for session length.*
- *Older children could relate to the session by recalling previous learning.*
- *Excellent behaviour management and good quality resources.*

Children's feedback - Explore, Engage, Reflect 2023

Springhead Primary 6.2.2023 Y3/4	Christianity	Islam
We learnt:	God is alive Christian prayer Variants of the bible God is three in one Christians pray in the church	Pray 5 times Go round the Ka'ba 7 times Allah is God's name They pray on a mat Prayer movements Wear the ihram (two whit sheets) Pillar names
We enjoyed:	Learning new things about both Learnt lots of different information about both religions	Azan in baby's ear Liked moving around to learn Different activities Dressing up in Eid clothes
Hugo Meynall Primary School		
Feedback from year 5: Lady in Black	Really enjoyed it. Interesting to learn about the religion and culture. Really good as it linked to our RE topic and it helped to develop our understanding. Interesting to look at Muslim clothing and to experience wearing it too.	

	Really fun, learning more about Mohammed and Muslims. Got to learn extra things that we haven't learned about in RE. Good to experience other cultures that are not in Loggerheads. Really good to be able to ask questions and have answers without worrying if we would offend anyone.	
Knypersley First 13.4.2023 Year 3 Islam Exhibition only	<p>Firstly, a big thank you for visiting on Monday morning this week, the children really enjoyed it.</p> <p>The children were able to remember lots of facts about The Five Pillars, the most important parts for them was being able to use the prayer mats and copy the actions leading into prayer. The girls liked being able to cover their hair with a scarf.</p> <p>The children were given time to ask lots of questions and were answered honestly. The comparison between Islam and Christianity was continuously referred to and the children benefitted from this, thank you.</p> <p>Many thanks Mrs Beckett and class 6</p>	
Hassell Primary 28.2.2023 Islam Exhibition only Year 5 Enjoyed	Christianity	Islam
Learnt Year 6 Enjoyed		<p>Going round the Ka'ba the children enjoyed the session Deciding on who to support with charity Choosing which food to eat after a fasting day</p> <p>Lots! Fasting Zakah to help the poor Prayer God exists Enjoyed the session Learning about Islam <i>A Muslim boy said 'It was nice to meet someone who understood me!'</i></p>
Learnt		<p>How to pray Preparation for prayer Learnt lots about the religion</p>
Ravensmead Primary 6.3.2023 Y3 Learnt and enjoyed		<p>Lots of new things Belief in one God Going round the Ka'ba 7 times Ka'ba has nothing inside They wear two white sheets Special movements Pray 5 times Women can wear any colour No food until it's dark Give 25p to charity</p>
Y4 Learnt lots and enjoyed	<p>Water on the head Bible in Welsh Soldiers have a small bible Give money to charity Bread and wine Jesus God and holy spirit</p>	<p>Ka'ba 7 times Prayer preparation Men wear white Read Qur'an in Ramadan Ka'ba and closeness to Allah Ka'ba is big Fast for 30 days</p>

v) Continuation of the project

Mary has a meeting with the CEO- Kathryn Wright on 21st June 2023 of Culham St Gabriel- which is an endowed charitable foundation. They provide grants for projects such as the above. The meeting will explore further grant support and the application process. Watch this space.

vi) Update on St Chad's Pattingham application for the RE quality Mark

In 2020 the school received a grant from this SACRE to pay for the award.

Due to COVID-19 this application for the RE Quality Mark was delayed and became an online application. This is the recent information from the school, it bodes well for a positive outcome and I would hope to invite a member of staff to the November 2023 meeting to share their experiences with us. Email extract.

I hope you are well. I know that this seems to have taken forever but just to let you know we are having our REQM assessment on June 21st. It has been a challenging task getting everything together with everything else that has been going on. Jen wanted everything ready before she requested the date.

You may already know, but we had our SIAMS inspection last term, by some turn of fate on the day of the 1st anniversary of my Dad passing away (someone was trying to keep me busy). Delighted to say we are an excellent school. The inspector was blown away - very, very proud. Thank you for your support with all these aspects.

vii) Request for support for RE resources from Flash Ley Primary School Stafford. Possible £200 support from the 2023-24 budget

Good afternoon Mary,

I hope this email finds you well.

I would firstly just like to show my appreciation to you and the other members of SACRE for the informative and extremely helpful presentation which I attended recently for the launch of the revised religious education syllabus. I was able to leave feeling much more confident in my delivery of the subject and the information you have provided in the syllabus is going to support me greatly to ensure my planning is not just progressive for the children but also for other members of staff. After having a look at the new planning, I have come up with lots of ideas that will ensure the children are engaged and they are able to learn through fun and discovery however as a school without a budget for RE I was wondering if I may be able to ask for some support with this matter, please? I am not sure if this is something you may be able to help with, however, I am looking for some resources which can be used in lessons that will support learning. I would be incredibly grateful if you have anything you could spare, from old books you may not use to artefacts and anything in-between!

If you are able to help in any way, I would be more than happy to keep you informed of how and when the resources are used.

Thank you again for your support. Taryn Sargeant RE Lead at Flash Ley.