

Minutes of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education Meeting held on 15 November 2023

Present: Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf (Chair)

Attendance	
Julie Thompson	Philip Atkins, OBE
Sam Kirwan	Paul Northcott
Lauren Nicholson Ward	Kath Perry, MBE
Gabi Oldfield	Paul Snape

1. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

Resolved:

- a. That Rev. Preb. Michael Metcalf be appointed as Chair of the SACRE until November 2024.
- b. That Lauren Nicholson-Ward be appointed as Vice-Chair of the SACRE until November 2024.

2. Apologies

Linda Goodwin, Dr Laow Panyasiri, Sam Phillips, Judy Wyman, Shaun Miles, Maddy Belle, Zoe Cahalan, Vicky Priestley, Cllr Mike Wilcox

These were received and accepted.

3. Welcome to New Members

The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) was informed that Lynsay Jennings was joining Committee B as a representative of the Church of England.

The current Baha'i representative Julie Thompson introduced Jacqueline Bhandra to the SACRE. Jacqueline will be taking over Julie's place on Committee A as the Baha'i representative, as Julie had moved out of the Staffordshire district.

Joanna Piech was also introduced to the committee as the new SACRE clerk.

4. Declaration of Any other Business

There were no declarations of any other business on this occasion.

5. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 28 June 2023

Minute 5 – 28 June 23 - Update on St Chad’s, Pattingham application for the Religious Education Quality Mark

The Chair made reference to the update on St Chad’s Religious Education Quality Mark (REQM). St Chad’s had been successful in attaining the Gold quality mark, and the school had been invited to join the SACRE meeting to discuss this achievement.

Sarah Yeoman’s – Head Teacher of St Chad’s Primary School, Pattingham and Jen Scarrott – the RE lead, were introduced to the SACRE and gave details of the processes the school had gone through to successfully attain the Gold mark.

The hard work of the school was noted, and the SACRE congratulated all those involved on their achievement.

Resolved:

- a. That the information included within the presentation be noted.
- b. That Sarah Yeomans and Jen Scarrott, be thanked for her presentation.
- c. That the minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 06 June 2023 be approved and signed by the Chair.

6. Information session from Taryn Sargeant (RE Lead) from Flash Ley Primary Stafford

Following on from the SACRE meeting held in June 2023, where the allocation of £200.00 to support Flash Ley Primary School to access RE resources had been approved, Taryn Sargeant, the RE Lead for the school gave a brief summary of the performance and positive improvements of Religious Education at the school. This included detail on the range of resources that had been purchased and accessed as a result of the funding.

Taryn concluded that the support and funding provided by SACRE had been invaluable and had helped to raise the profile of R.E at the school. It had also allowed the school to move from an Ofsted rating of ‘Requires Improvement’ 6 months ago to a rating of ‘Good’ now with three Outstanding features.

The hard work of the school was noted and the SACRE congratulated all those involved on their achievement.

The presentation led into a discussion about religious diversity and how RE engaged with this. Taryn explained that despite having no affiliation to any particular faith herself, she felt able to support pupils in their learning

as per the revised Staffordshire RE 2023 Agreed Syllabus. One member stated that in his opinion teachers of RE needed to have a faith in order to support pupils with their RE learning. Other members of SACRE did not endorse this view.

Resolved:

- a. That the information included within the presentation be noted.
- b. That Taryn Sargeant, be thanked for her presentation.

The guests from Flash Ley and St Chad's left the meeting.

7. Update on membership

The advisor shared that there were a number of current vacancies on the SACRE membership. The Chair advised that the committee looked forward to a development on the Muslim vacancy in committee A, as this had often fallen short of representation in the past. The Clerk raised the fact that a number of nominating bodies had been contacted and whilst interest was there, availability and capacity was often the reason for representatives being unable to join the committee. The Chair pointed out that any new member joining or replacing others would also be subject to county council approval.

8. An Update on Key Issues

The SACRE were informed that R.E hubs were becoming more established and took the Committee through the items included within the report.

RE Hubs

The advisor informed SACRE members of RE Hub meetings taking place. Details were provided for any members wishing to attend.

Interactive Session

On Thursday 16th November, the advisor would be attending a West Midlands Regional RE Hub webinar. At this webinar 4 questions would be discussed. The advisor shared the questions with the committee and opened up the meeting for a discussion in small groups, to gather this information.

The committee came back together and shared their views on the questions in hand. SACRE members were asked to provide any additional feedback they felt appropriate after the meeting which could be submitted to the advisor.

SACRE Webpage

The advisor also raised a question as to whether a SACRE website/webpage could be developed that was dedicated to its work. This would be used to share knowledge, advice, and information to a wider audience. The advisor highlighted that they were also in discussion with Entrust to see if they would also be willing to develop a webpage. If Entrust were able to do this it was suggested that there may be a way of merging the two webpages to avoid duplication. It was agreed that the Clerk would investigate whether this was something Staffordshire County Council could offer and report back.

GCSE and A level update on results from 2022

The Advisor shared the GCSE & A-Level statistics on R.E results from 2022. It was explained that Staffordshire Schools for Religious Education studies, compared to the National schools, were 3-4% lower than the national averages. This was considered a normal trait but was a still reported as a commendable result.

Work Force Data

A Workforce Data report was shared with SACRE members for 2022 relating to hours of teaching RE/RS. The members discussed the 0 hours allocation and the schools where no hours were recorded. It was concluded that it was pleasing that 98% of schools were teaching RE/RS in year 7 and 8 which was an improvement on earlier figures. The advisor would be carrying out further investigations where 0 hours were recorded in the data base by scrutinising the school web pages.

The West Hill Legacy project on Explore, Engage, Reflect

The advisor updated the members on the halted workshops for the West Hill Legacy project, due to long term sickness of the workshop lead. Sadly the workshop lead had passed away very recently. The advisor reassured members that a list of schools had been compiled in the hope that these workshops would recommence with a new trainer.

The Development Plan 2023-2024

The advisor stated that the Development Plan for 23-24 was not yet completed but would be ready for February 24 and would include all the areas discussed in today's meeting.

Resolved: That the update on key issues be noted.

9. NASACRE Update

The advisor gave a brief update on NASACRE. It was summarised that the Regional Hub Network were working closely with NASACRE. The Chair shared an update with the members of the leadership of NASACRE, specifically in terms of it going through a transition at senior member level, due to the original Chair giving notice to resign, and the next Chairperson since advising that they would no longer be standing as Chair. This situation will be monitored, and more information will be shared at the next meeting.

Resolved: That the NASACRE update be noted.

10. Application for Culham St Gabriel charity grant including a Safeguarding Policy

It was shared that the advisor to SACRE had recently applied for a grant to support this project, which involved the ongoing developments in schools. This application process involved the completion of an "Expression of Interest" form alongside a first interview with the CEO at Culham St Gabriel (CSTG), followed by a second interview to further explore the project brief. The application was presented to the Charity of Trustees of CSTG, with each stage being supported by paperwork and references.

The SACRE were asked to vote to confirm that it was willing to support the application for CSTG grant funding. All four committees were unanimous in their decision to support the application. It was explained that the SACRE committee would monitor the CSTG budget of £6500 including any carry forward into the new financial year and that purchase order numbers would be used to access the funds as per the summary budget.

The project would commence in January 2024 and run until January 2025.

The advisor also shared that it was necessary to develop a new Safeguarding Policy, which was one of the conditions of applying for the grant. The new policy was shared with members, and the advisor explained that the Policy had been modified in a way to meet SACRE needs. No objections were raised by the committee, who approved the use of the amended Policy.

Resolved:

- a. That the vote to approve the application for CSTG grant funding be noted.
- b. That it be noted that the SACRE committee would monitor the CSTG budget.
- c. That the amended Safeguarding Policy be noted and approved

11. The Religious Education Council publication

Members received a copy of the RE Council publication The National Standard Entitlement. The Chair gave a brief summary of the publication, stating that, although it was issued and adopted by the RE Council, it wasn't a statutory document, but it was being commended to schools for their consideration.

The advisor shared that some of the publication echoed our agreed syllabus, and it had a big emphasis on world views. There were good factors and good practices to be noted and followed and it was requested that members take note of the information.

The Chair commented on the reference in the Agenda papers to the RE Network and its critique of the publication. The RE Network was a Christian-based organisation that held a traditional view of RE. It was arguing that the proposed emphasis on children developing their own worldview cut across faith transmission within families and faith communities.

Resolved: That the publication and information be noted.

12. SACRE annual Report for 2022-2023

The SACRE annual Report for 22-23 was presented to SACRE. The Chair explained the report was developed to make schools accountable for Religious Education to the Local Authority.

SACRE members were asked to provide feedback on the report with any additional comments being passed onto the committee Clerk within 10 days of the meeting.

After this period the report would be amended if appropriate and sent to appropriate bodies such as SCC, Unions, NASACRE and the DfE

Resolved: That the report and updates be noted.

13. The SACRE Budget 2023-2024

Members were provided with account a monitoring report of the 2023/24 budget. They were also informed that Entrust would not be taking money from this budget for their workshops moving forwards, and a Purchase Order payment process would be implemented.

The Advisor asked members for their approval of the implementation of this process for the provision of any grants made in the future. Members unanimously approved this request.

Resolved:

- a. That the final SACRE Budget for 2023/24, be noted.
- b. That the implementation of the Purchase Order process to support the provision of any grants made in the future, be approved.

14. Applications for variation of practice

There were no applications made on this occasion.

15. Dates of next meetings

Dates of the next meetings were confirmed as:

- 7th February 2024
- 26th June 2024
- 13th November 2024

All meetings commence at 2:00pm unless otherwise stated

Chair