

MINUTES

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education Meeting - 3 February 2021

Present: **Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf**

Mohamed Sedky, Linda Goodwin, Julie Thompson, Sam Kirwan, Mohamed Parekh, Ian Lawson, Lauren Nicholson Ward, Mark Sutton, Syed Hussain, Judy Wyman, Vickie Longson, Bob Spencer, Lydia Bartlett and Shaun Miles

Apologies for absence: Sam Phillips, Gabi Oldfield and Maddy Bell

Also in attendance - Mary Gale (SACRE advisor) and Mandy Pattinson (Clerk)

PART ONE

79. Welcome to New Members

There were no new members at the meeting. It was confirmed that a replacement from the Free Churches had been requested, but none had been received as yet.

80. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 18 November 2020

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 18 November 2020 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

It was noted that there was a spelling mistake on page 6 Minute 76 (e) should read 'Judy Wyman' not Julie.

NOTE:

1. It was noted that the SACRE advisor had contacted local universities (Minute 74) offering support to post graduate students, but no requests had been received as yet due to the universities concentrating on the challenges of Covid-19.
2. The SACRE advisor had provided her email address for Chris Giles to support him in his project, but there had been no contact to date. (Minute 71)
3. Minute 76 (e) Judy Wyman had contacted the County Council accounts team to ask if unused budget could be carried over, but no response had been received.

81. An update on Key Issues including COVID 19

SACRE considered the report which covered the main issues affecting Religious Education (RE) in Staffordshire since the last meeting. Further to the written report, the following information was provided:

- Continuous Professional Development – Only one school had taken up the offer of support in the form of RE training. Unfortunately, one school did not make the offer financially viable. Entrust would offer to schools again later in the year.
- With regard to the Sacred spaces project, this had been put on hold until summer 2021 due to Covid-19.

- The Advisor, Mary Gale's continued support for Staffordshire SACRE had been confirmed until the end of April 2022.
- It was reported that 5 schools had been allocated grants to support RE and Collective Worship (CW) in their schools.
- The use of the Governor Information Pack had been an effective way of contacting school leaders/governors and informing them of Religious Education and Collective Worship. This method of communication would continue to be utilised. The Advisor provided information for this pack.

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

82. Reflections on a research paper on Religious Education

SACRE considered the research paper produced by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues from the University of Birmingham which was published in Autumn 2020. The report focused on pupil character development as defined by Ofsted and the influence a teacher of RE could have on character development of pupils' dependent on their own views.

The report found that:

1. Personal worldviews informed RE teachers approaches in the classroom.
2. RE teachers were found to have fair and tolerant views of other religions and worldviews.
3. There was strong agreement among RE teachers that RE contributes to pupils' character development.
4. RE teachers that have a religious faith were more likely to think religions promote good character.

Lauren Nicholson Ward declared an interest in this item as she had been interviewed as part of the project.

The study had been online and seemed to have been sent to all schools in all areas of the country.

The report was welcomed, members thought that it was an encouraging report. It was felt that it demonstrated the professionalism of RE teachers. There was a concern that a broader view of beliefs, which could be called 'British Values or World Views' and how they fit into the broader social setting, was not as explicit as it could have been. This was acknowledged but the report was more related to character development and the attention this was now receiving due to the change in Ofsted criteria.

Members felt that the document was useful as it could have implications for the RE rationale within the Agreed Syllabus which was due to be reviewed this year and was subject to a later report on the agenda.

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

83. Procedures for Agreed Syllabus review

The Education Act requires a Local Authority to review its locally agreed syllabus every five years. Staffordshire's syllabus was due to be reviewed in 2021. An Agreed Syllabus Conference would have to be organised in order to review the current syllabus which would then eventually be formally approved by the County Council.

The Chair outlined the 4 stages to facilitate the review of the current syllabus and provided information on the makeup of the people who would be part of the Agreed Syllabus Conference. This would include current SACRE members. The ASC would run parallel to the termly SACRE meeting, commencing in June 2021. The LA would adopt the members of SACRE to be members of the ASC.

The ASC would carry out the formal review, reflecting on current RE studies, seeking the views of teachers, pupils and other interested parties through working groups and surveys. The ASC would then reflect on this information and decide the next course of action eg re-write the AS, tweak the AS, expand the current AS. This revised version would then be passed on to the LA and rolled out to schools.

Entrust and the County Council were reviewing options on how to carry out the review and would report back to the next meeting. This has cost implications for the LA.

Members asked questions about the external scrutiny procedures. The chair provided reassurance that the process would be open and transparent adhering to the regulations.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

84. Collective Worship (CW)

SACRE was reminded of the legislation regarding school worship. The report provided a summary of the school requirements. As schools often require support such as ideas and inspiration with the delivery of CW, SACRE had commissioned their advisor to develop a resource to provide support. The draft document entitled "Staffordshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education – collective worship support – exploring the role of collective worship in the life of a school" had been produced. The draft document had been received by Entrust.

It was noted that there were many opportunities for schools to develop non-Christian themes such as '*great world leaders*' and '*festivals*' to support diversity. All of the themes would support the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) curriculum. Remote learning links, where appropriate would also be added.

The final draft would be considered at the June SACRE meeting and then circulated to schools in time for preparations for the Autumn term 2021.

It was acknowledged that RE and CW are closely linked and that faith and non-faith schools could during CW support the broader curriculum whilst remaining sensitive to the individual beliefs of pupils and staff. The draft CW document was designed to generate ideas and support schools rather than instruct them on what to cover or how. It was stated by the advisor that CW should be invitational in nature.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and that the final draft be considered at the next meeting.

85. An Update on NASACRE

The Chairman included the following information as part of the NASACRE update:

- NASACRE had been in discussions with the Department of Education (DfE) on the delivery of collective worship in schools during Covid-19. Guidance was that this could be achieved if done within bubbles. This information had been sent to schools in the Governor Information Pack.
- With regard to determinations. Due to Covid-19, extensions in timescales had been given to LA for schools re renew their determinations. (These have to be done every five years). Hampshire SACRE were carrying out some research into what was happening,
- It was reported that some SACREs were commissioning private consultants to develop their Agreed Syllabus and that a copyright had been applied. Some LA's now no longer displayed their syllabus on the web site for this reason but produced a description of what the document covered. Staffordshire have in the past, made theirs available on the internet for others to use on the proviso that it is acknowledged if it is used.
- NASACRE, in conjunction with the DfE was working on a standardised format for Annual Reports. The results of their work should be available in Summer 2021.
- Liverpool SACRE had produced an online clip for Holocaust Memorial Day which included an interview with Ziggy Shipper. It can be downloaded from YouTube via: www.youtube.com/watch?v=gQQLnpchn9c

RESOLVED: That the update report be noted.

86. SACRE Budget 2020-21

SACRE considered the update report on both the 2019/2020 and the 2020/21 budget. The meeting was informed that the figures in red for the 2019/20 indicated an overspend which had been carried forward from the Westhill Endowment project. The Key Stage 3 project would not now happen due to the pandemic and Mary Gale was trying to ensure that the funds would be carried forward and not lost. Apparently, this was for the Entrust Auditors to decide and this would be reported back to the SACRE.

Officers had informed Mary Gale that there would be no roll over at the end of the financial year, however, Judy Wyman was talking to senior officers to see if this was still the case.

It was felt that should any excess budget not be able to be carried forward, schools should be provided with updated support materials on RE or CW.

Mary Gale reported that she had approached the LA to see if there were any additional funds to support the syllabus review. This would be reported to the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

87. Applications for variation of practice

There were none on this occasion.

88. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting was due to be held on Wednesday, 30 June 2021.

SACRE Members were requested to remember the challenges faced by the Burton-upon-Trent area due to Covid-19.

**Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf
Chairman**