

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

HELD ON TUESDAY, 17th OCTOBER, 2023 AT 4.30 PM

**VENUE: COMMITTEE ROOM 1 CITY HALL, PLATER WAY,
SUNDERLAND**

Present: -

Local Councillors

Councillor Dodds

Christian and Other Denominations

Tony Wortman
Rev Dr David Whiting
Zaf Iqbal

Church of England

Amy Clarke
Caroline Weir
Rev Chris Howson

Teachers Association

Louise Ridings
Nicola Jackman
Steven Beck

In Attendance

Cathryn Forbes, Specialist Officer
Richard Cullen, Strategic Lead, School Improvement & Early Years
Paul Wood, Principal Governance Services Officer

Caroline Weir welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced herself as the Chair of SACRE to the new Members present. However, Ms Weir advised that she had originally intended to submit apologies to this meeting due to a prior engagement and Ms Clarke as Vice Chair was to Chair the meeting. Therefore, Ms Clarke would be referred to as Chair within the minutes for this meeting only.

SAC216 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors P. Smith and Williams. Also apologies from Matt Moore, Elizabeth Wortman, Dhavalkumar Vyas and Tracy Conway.

SAC217 Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 20th June, 2023

It was AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 20th June 2023 were a true record subject to the amendment of the typo on page 4 para 7 – which should read NASACRE Briefing.

SAC 218 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

SAC219 SACRE Membership

The Assistant Director of Law & Governance submitted a report (copy attached) for Members of the Standing Advisory Council to review and approve the list of volunteers (listed in 3.1 of the report) onto its Membership.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Paul Wood, Clerk to the Council presented the report and advised that since the publication of the agenda, there had been additional volunteers to be approved by the Council as follows:-

Nicola Jackman	-	Teachers Association
Rachael Winlow	-	Teachers Association
Steven Beck	-	Teachers Association

It was acknowledged that Mr Beck and Ms Jackman were in attendance at the meeting and were welcomed to the Council.

It was AGREED to approve the new volunteers listed in paragraph 3.1 of the report onto the Membership of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education and to also agree those volunteers reported verbally at the meeting by the Clerk.

SAC220 Agreed Syllabus: Training Update

Mrs Forbes addressed the Council advising of a recent session carried out to review what had been done and to teach thematic units, which had been an opportunity to bring together sections of learning and introduce different view points and an opportunity to catch up on missed knowledge.

Mrs Forbes further advised that four sessions had been carried out last year and in October they had Lat Blakelock of RE Today to provide a session with 45 schools coming out to attend. This session covered Hinduism, Christianity and Islam and how to be more creative in how they teach things.

37 of the schools that attended completed the evaluation with 36 marking as very good and 1 as good. All loved the venue and the catering.

Mr Cullen informed that the training had been provided for free to the schools and the savings provided by moving the venue and catering to in house had meant that they were looking at the possibility of providing an additional programme/event.

Rev. Howson commented that the Sunderland Interfaith Forum would love to attend such an event to be able to provide a brief talk.

Ms Weir commented that making the event free had been brilliant and it was lovely to see a buzz in the room and it had been a chance for people to Network and to be able to plug the work of SACRE.

The Chair added that the networking had been really important and the way that Lat had talked through the content had been so beneficial.

Ms Jackman informed the Council that the practical activities had been really useful and she was able to take those back to her school.

Ms Ridings commented that the content over Art and the Forrest Schools had been interesting and that how you present showed that the subject didn't have to be dry or boring.

Mr Beck commented that the event certainly gave food for thought with notions on how to present different ideas on R.E. The presentation had been inspirational and he couldn't wait to feed this back to his school.

Mrs Forbes referred to the Agreed Syllabus and the requirement for renewal every 5 years and commented that this was no time at all, with the process for the next one to begin next year. This has a huge impact on teachers getting to grips with a new syllabus and the feedback around the buzz of the current syllabus did mean that there was general inclination that this syllabus be continued.

With regards to mention of Forrest Schools, Rev Howson wished to suggest the use of St Peters and highly recommended it.

SAC221 Annual Report

Mrs Forbes referred to the Annual Report (Copy Circulated in Agenda Papers) and commented that it was nice to see the Membership increasing with different faiths becoming represented more.

Mrs Forbes informed that she had included the Teachers comments on the agreed syllabus within the Report and also that para 4 of 2.2 Training, Monitoring and Other Information was to include the following paragraph:-

SACRE has looked at the preliminary findings of the RE GCSE results for Sunderland Schools 2023 and they are as follows:

- A total of 899 entries (no indication as to which course)
- 58% of entries identified themselves as female.
- 42% of entries identified themselves as male
- 71% pass rate at Grade 4 – 9 (F-60% M-40%)

Members discussed the results and the issue of Sunderland schools not taking RE further after primary school level with their focus heavily on English and Maths and also the issue that the majority of Sunderland Schools were Academies now.

Mrs Forbes enquired if Members disagreed with anything within the report or if there was anything they wished to be added. As there were no amendments/additions requested it was:-

AGREED to approve the Annual Report which was to be sent off to NASACRE and the Department for Education.

SAC222 Newsletter Items

Mrs Forbes advised the Council that the Newsletter was produced once a quarter and circulated to all schools. This edition was to include a review of the Conference Day and details of the Sacred Arts Competition and requested if there was anything Members wished to be included in addition.

It was also discussed and suggested that items on the Interfaith Week and the walk on 19th November be included. Rev Howson agreed to send details to Mrs Forbes on this.

Mr Wortman also agreed to send through details of the Holocaust Memorial Event for inclusion.

Rev Howson also suggested that the Faith Museum were worth contacting about any possible events.

Ms Weir suggested that the Sunderland Interfaith Forum provide a piece for the spring newsletter detailing what it was and the work they do.

SAC223 NASACRE Briefing and Training – Virtual Training Paper

Mrs Forbes updated the group on the latest NASCARE Briefing and gave a presentation/run through of how to access the NACASRE website and its resources including training and support.

It was agreed that Mr Wood was to circulate the log in details to the Council once again, as there were a number of new Members.

SAC224 NASACRE Conference London

Details of the upcoming NASACRE Conference in London were shared and this was to be held on 20th May 2024. Should Members wish to attend they were advised to contact Mr Wood in the first instance and these places would be fully funded by SACRE.

It was also advised that details of this were included on the NASACRE website, as discussed in the previous item.

SCA225 Any Other Business

Rev. Howson wished to offer the service of the Interfaith Forum to all schools and they were more than happy to give any talks if needed. Rev. Howson also referred to recent world events and commented that they could offer any extra support to schools if needed.

Mr Zaf Iqbal advised of availability to provide talks and informed that they also provide tours of the mosque. Mrs Weir referred to previous meetings in which the Kitemark accreditation for speakers to attend schools was discussed and asked that this be circulated to Mr Iqbal.

The Chair wished to advise the Council, with the new Members added, of the Working Group established to consider Collective Worship and what the schools were currently doing around this and how SACRE could support them. The Chair advised that if anyone wished to be part of the working group to get in touch.

Mr Wortman advised Members of a Coffee Morning scheduled and circulated details should they wish to attend.

SCA226 Date and Time of the next meeting

The next meeting was to be held on Tuesday 19th March, 2024.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

(Signed) Amy Clarke,
Chair