

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

HELD ON TUESDAY, 2ND FEBRUARY 2016 AT 4.30 PM

VENUE: SANDHILL CENTRE

Present: -

Local Councillors

Councillor P Stewart – Chair

Christian and Other Denominations

Ms C Nicol

Church of England

Mrs W Lundgren

Co-Opted

Ms L Bousfield

In Attendance

Annette Parr, Local Authority Officer

Cathryn Forbes, Specialist Officer

Zena Wilkinson, Governance Services Officer

SAC42 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Marshall, Smith and Williams and Rev G Phillips.

SAC43 Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 11th June 2015

It was AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th June 2015 were a true record subject to the following amendments:

SAC39 NASACRE National Conference Feedback – page 4, eighth paragraph should read Humanist not Humanitarians.

SAC44 Matters Arising

SAC39 Terms of Office of Current Members

Annette Parr advised that letters were sent to the Bangladeshi Community inviting representation. Mr Khan had received details of the meeting but had not attended.

Cathryn Forbes reported that Karenza Passmore had advised that a number of SACRE Groups had experienced problems when seeking nominations from the Diocese.

Annette Parr noted that a meeting with a representative from the Salvation Army was still to be taken forward by herself and Councillor Stewart.

SAC40 RE Conference

Cathryn Forbes advised that the RE Conference had not been taken forward, as problems had been encountered trying to agree dates with the speakers and expressions of interest to attend the RE Conference were very low. She advised that invitations were circulated twice and only four schools responded, therefore it was felt the RE Conference was not cost viable.

SAC45 SACRE Evaluation Report

Annette Parr tabled the Draft Report for members consideration, advising that this had been taken forward jointly with Cathryn Forbes.

Annette Parr acknowledged some areas within the Report needed to be extended and references to Durham needed to be changed to Sunderland.

Members were requested to consider the content of the report and contact Annette Parr with any comments or suggestions.

Cathryn Forbes highlighted that the NASACRE Briefing circulated had requested regional SACRE's to complete their annual report.

Win Lundgren noted that the Sunderland SACRE's were scheduled in line with Durham SACRE's and questioned the synchronisation. Cathryn Forbes explained that she believed it was beneficial to hold their SACRE meetings, after Durham, to enable relevant information to be cascaded.

Win Lundgren noted that the current RE curriculum was purchased and adopted through Durham and questioned if it would be more pertinent to agree the syllabus content for the full North East region. Cathryn Forbes advised that the representatives from Durham were the perceived leaders for the RE curriculum and advised that there were a number of neighbouring authorities who had taken forward an agreement with Durham for the RE curriculum. Cathryn Forbes advised that this enabled schools to purchase the curriculum first, prior to any other resources, to ensure it met their needs.

Cathryn Forbes explained that in some districts a collective SACRE group had been implemented, due to demographic issues.

Annette Parr advised that she had been contacted by representatives from Stockton SACRE suggesting a joint meeting with the Chairs of neighbouring SACRE's, as they believed this would be beneficial. Annette Parr agreed to forward the correspondence to Councillor Stewart.

Councillor Stewart questioned how other SACRE Groups were going forward. Cathryn Forbes shared that she believed some were struggling in a manner similar to Sunderland.

Win Lundgren shared that she believed it may be beneficial to contact local area representatives. Cathryn Forbes advised that Durham SACRE members also sat on other regional SACRE Groups.

Members noted the following changes required with the Draft Report:

Section	2.2.4	Reference to Durham to be changed to Sunderland.
	3	Cathryn Forbes acknowledged no visits had been undertaken to date.
	4.3	Reference to Durham to be changed to Sunderland.
	7.1	There was no SACRE meeting held in November 2015.
	7.2	To be changed to September 2014/2015.
	7.3	Reference to Durham to be changed to Sunderland

Annette Parr requested members to provide further comments and suggestions by 26th February 2016.

Members AGREED:

- to consider the Draft Annual Report and provide comments and suggestions directly to Annette Parr by 26th February 2016, and
- to delegate responsibility to complete the final report to Annette Parr and Cathryn Forbes

SAC46 Examination Data

Annette Parr circulated draft GCSE Examination Results for 2015. She highlighted that the information circulated was draft and requested members kept the content confidential.

Members discussed the data presented and Cathryn Forbes highlighted that the overall examination results would be determined by the type of RE course taken forward, for example short courses would not lead to a GCSE qualification.

Win Lundgren questioned how Citizenship was taught if not within RE. Cathryn Forbes advised that within a number of schools short courses were taken forward for RE and Citizenship.

Win Lundgren questioned if pupils would receive homework in relation to Citizenship. Cathryn Forbes advised no, she explained Citizenship was taught but it would be up to individual schools how this was taken forward, for example individually or “mapped out” within curriculum subjects. She advised that a significant proportion of schools chose the “mapped out” option.

Cathryn Forbes explained that there had been a shift in schools following the implementation of Progress 8. She explained that RE GCSE examination results would now count toward a pupil’s Progress 8 results and highlighted that RE had not been included within the Ebacc subjects.

Annette Parr acknowledged that there was a need to consider what data was required for the next academic period and how this was presented. Cathryn Forbes advised that secondary schools were taking forward entries for courses now, for the next academic period, and they would be able to identify whether pupils were going forward with the short or long RE courses prior to September 2016.

Members AGREED:

- to note the Examination Data provided
- to note the data provided was confidential.

SAC47 Feedback from Regional SACRE Meetings

Cathryn Forbes tabled the Sunderland Specialist Advisor Report (Autumn 2015)

Sunderland Network Meeting

A secondary network meeting took place on 13th October 2015, attended by 4 secondary teachers. The meeting began with a visit from Karenza Passmore from “The North East Religious Learning Resources Centre”, who provided information on training that was available during autumn 2015 and early 2016, on the Teaching of Islam. Unfortunately no one had taken up the offer of the training.

Karenza Passmore had also discussed the RE Hub that had been developed in Durham (using funding from Cullum St Gabriel’s). Sunderland teachers could be part of this or indeed create their own sub-hub. Cathryn Forbes advised that she would continue to try to promote the sub-hubs.

Win Lundgren questioned which organisation employed Karenza. Cathryn Forbes advised that Karenza was employed by the Diocese.

Cathryn Forbes advised future networks, and their role, were discussed at the forum. She explained that whilst many teachers attended Durham networks, as they had service level agreements with Durham, there was still a belief that establishing something locally would be beneficial. It was recognised that Sunderland did not have the level of funding available to Durham, as a higher proportions of the schools in Sunderland had converted to an academy, which may result in a cost being charged.

Cathryn Forbes advised that attendees believed it would be beneficial to arrange training on Core Christianity, in light of the new GCSE's.

Annette Parr advised that there was SACRE funding available and if the training could be arranged it may be possible that this could become a self-sustaining process. Cathryn Forbes advised that she believed training would be beneficial for individuals with responsibility for RE, in secondary and primary educational establishments.

Claire Nicol advised that, from her experience, she believed staff had concerns/worries in relation to teaching Christianity. Cathryn Forbes advised that she was keen to see the core concepts, especially in line with the new GCSE examinations, as no accredited courses had been drafted. Win Lundgren questioned who held responsibility for this and Cathryn Forbes advised that this was the responsibility of the examination boards. She advised that the outline was there but there was no concrete syllabus.

Support Offered to Schools

Cathryn Forbes advised that it had come to her attention that Kepier Academy was not meeting its statutory requirements to deliver RE, although the Academy was delivering PHSE and Citizenship.

Members were advised that following this information coming to light, and some campaigning undertaken by Cathryn Forbes and Durham, a meeting was arranged with an Assistant Head at Kepier to move this issue forward. As a result of the intervention RE would be re-introduced to the curriculum, for one hour per week, from September 2016.

Cathryn Forbes advised that there were no teaching training colleges for RE, which impacted on the number of qualified RE teachers. She shared that following the implementation of Progress 8 this was a concern for the future.

Win Lundgren stated that she was concerned a school could go forward without meeting statutory requirements and questioned if this was not an issue which would be highlighted during an Ofsted Inspection. Cathryn Forbes advised that Ofsted no longer commented on RE and, as far as she was aware, they had never raised issues with an educational establishment when they were not meeting their statutory requirements for RE.

Cathryn Forbes advised that this was something raised within the NASACRE Briefing 10. It questioned how SACRE could work when so many of the procedures to ensure RE was implemented were no longer in place.

Cathryn Forbes advised that the NASACRE Briefing 10 offered a number of issues for SACRE's to consider, including:

- Repeal of the requirement for schools to have an "Act of Worship"
- The introduction of a "Statutory National Framework for Religion and Belief Learning". The impact of a nationally determined Religious Education e.g. the right to withdrawal by parents.

Mrs Hodgson questioned the possibility of moving towards a national framework. Cathryn Forbes advised that Academy's do not follow the national curriculum. She advised that Briefing 10 provided a synopsis but highlighted that these were issues SACRE's needed to consider.

Cathryn Forbes reported that NASACRE had appointed its first Patron, the Rt Hon Charles Clarke.

Cathryn Forbes advised that the next NASACRE Conference would be held in May 2016 and they had extended an invitation to attend to all SACRE members. She requested members to contact her directly if they wished to attend.

Durham SACRE

Cathryn Forbes reported that she had attended the Durham SACRE meeting in November 2015 and shared the following:

- They were encountering difficulties filling Church of England vacancies and had found action from the Diocese slow.
- They were it difficult to get sub committees to work.

Cathryn Forbes advised that it was felt the last meeting was poorly attended, however they were quorate and had 11 representatives in attendance.

- Raising the profile of SACRE remained a priority.

Cathryn Forbes advised that she had shared, with the Chair of the Durham SACRE, the leaflets circulated to schools, which detailed the work undertaken, by Sunderland SACRE.

RE Trainees in the North East

Cathryn Forbes reported that the Universities within the region did not deliver an PGCE course in Religious Education. This meant schools no longer had students on placements and without functioning networks locally teachers had no formal method of keeping up to date with new teaching methods in RE, or indeed resources. She advised that Shotton Hall was a "Teacher Training School" and they had 4 places available for 2015-2016 for trainees, some in RE, but none of the places were taken up. It was thought that potential recruits were unaware of how to access places on these new routes into training.

Mrs Hodgson advised that School Direct was struggling as the funding had been significantly reduced and schools could no longer afford to take the student teacher placements forward.

Members were advised that within his letter Lord Nash had stated that they were looking at educational routes but the concern was what routes they were actually looking at and whether these were appropriate.

Mrs Hodgson requested and received confirmation there were no PCGE Courses in Sunderland. Cathryn Forges advised that Newcastle no longer provided History or Geography, as well as RE.

Members AGREED:

- to contact Cathryn Forbes with expressions of interest to attend the NASACRE Conference, to be held in May 2016

SAC48 Any Other Business

There were no other items of business raised.

SAC49 Date and Time of Future Meeting

14th March 2016 at 4.30 pm – Venue: Montgomery Room, Sandhill Centre
Annette Parr submitted her apologies for this meeting

23rd June 2016 at 4.30 pm – Venue: Montgomery Room, Sandhill Centre

(Signed) Councillor P Stewart,
Chairman