

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

HELD ON TUESDAY, 20th NOVEMBER, 2018 AT 4.30 PM

VENUE: BUNNY HILL CENTRE

Present: -

Local Councillors

Councillor Farthing
Councillor Hunt

Christian and Other Denominations

Matt Moore
Andrew Barron

Church of England

Stuart Bain
Caroline Weir

Teachers Association

Natalie Fountain

In Attendance

Richard Cullen, Lead Support and Intervention Officer
Cathryn Forbes, Specialist Officer
Paul Wood, Principal Governance Services Officer

SAC113 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillor Marshall, Mullen, Williams, Mrs Win Lundgren, Miss Lisa Quinn-Briton, Ms Fiona Bridle

SAC114 Election of a Chairman and Vice Chairman

Councillor Farthing was elected Chairman of the SACRE with Councillor Marshall (upon her agreement) elected as Vice Chairman.

SAC 115 Nomination to join the SACRE Membership

Paul Wood introduced Mr Andrew Barron and Mr Stuart Bain to the Council who were welcomed to the meeting and the SACRE membership.

It was AGREED to add Mr Andrew Barron and Mr Stuart Bain to the Membership of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education.

SAC116 Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 26th June, 2018

It was AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 26th June 2018 were a true record subject to the inclusion of Councillor Hunt and Miss Caroline Weir's apologies.

SAC117 Matters Arising

With regards to Membership, the Chairman commented on the need for more diversity and to welcome other faiths to the Council. Mr Bain advised that he was happy to have discussions with the attendees at the Inter-faith groups about joining SACRE.

In relation to the Chairman's enquiry over the Survey Monkey Update, Mr Cullen advised that it would be interesting to see what arose in January in terms of the curriculum first draft, which would aid the discussions further.

SAC118 Religion and World Views – The Way Forward, a National Plan for RE

Cathryn Forbes circulated a copy of the response from NASACRE in relation to the Commission's report and advised that this was an opportunity to comment and offer feedback on their findings.

In relation to the proposal to change the subject title from Religious Education to Religion and World Views, the Chairman commented that she felt this was a move in the right direction as it would encourage debate over what was going on in the world and behaviours.

Matt Moore commented that it appeared that students did not relate education with Religion anymore.

Mr Stuart Bain commented that the danger with the term World Views was how to define this, which views to take notice of. Religion was not a world view so whilst he appreciated what they were trying to do and agreed to an extent he did not think it was the right wording/title to use.

Mr Andrew Barron agreed and added that he did not think changing the name was the way to go.

Mrs Forbes queried if they were moving away from religion or was it world views of Religions.

Mr Bain commented that religion was not an institutional world view and he did not think the definition was correct so this would become an individualistic approach and he found this part of the proposal problematic.

The Chairman referred to paragraph 7 of the report which she felt summed up what the aim was and queried if SACRE had any say over the naming of the subjects.

Members raised concerns over the lack of people taking up qualifications in Religious studies with a lack of teaching specialists as a result, especially at A Level.

Miss Caroline Weir referred to the changing to local area networks and the removal of the statutory duty for Council's to provide them and commented that if the funding was gone then this tended to signal the end of SACRE, which could then have a knock on effect, if SACRE was not required, then would the question of requirement for Religious Education be raised.

Matt Moore commented that this could allow schools to tailor the subject to the students that they had enrol but it could also be used as a reason not to bother at all and he felt there was a need to have some sort of statutory requirement still.

Miss Weir commented that the scenario was not that different to the one already in place as schools could decide on provision now and there needed to be a statutory requirement to make that difference.

Mrs Forbes suggested that there would be some benefits to having regional rather than local networks.

Mr Bain commented that he was unsure how this could be carried out without enforcement and questioned where the programmes of study would come from as "the body" referred to was not clear and he did not know what was different as we already had a national entitlement.

Mrs Forbes commented that the proposals were set up as though they would change the face of Religious Education yet upon further consideration this was not the case.

Mr Bain commented that in general terms he applauded the sentiment of the proposals but there was an awful lot of detail that he was unsure of and queried who would be taking note of the Council's concerns and comments.

The Chairman referred to the last paragraph of NASACRE's response and commented that this raised the same concerns and points that the Council had expressed.

Ms Fountain commented that pupils should not be disadvantaged because the right teachers were not in place.

Mrs Forbes advised that the NASACRE Briefing was on 14th December so she would collate all comments made and provide those on behalf of SACRE.

It was AGREED that Cathryn Forbes would collate the comments and concerns raised by SACRE to feed into the response from NASACRE in relation to the consultation on the Religion and World Views – The Way Forward, a National Plan for RE.

SAC119 NASACRE Conference –Wednesday 22nd May, Manchester

Mrs Forbes advised of the date and location of the next NASACRE Conference and commented that if any Members wished to be the representative of Sunderland SACRE could they get in touch outside of the meeting and that there was a budget for costs and train fares etc.

SAC120 Update from National Briefing documentation

Mrs Forbes advised the Council that there was to be no change to everyday SACRE at the moment and the NASACRE website contained funding details and surveys for Members information. Future briefings were to include agreed syllabus and guidance on right of withdrawal.

Mrs Forbes commented that inter faith week had passed now, so this was something to that should be considered for next year.

With regards to Mrs Forbes comments in relation to the lack of Jewish representation on SACRE, Mr Bain advised that the Jewish community was very small in Sunderland. Mrs Forbes informed that she would send out an invitation to the Jewish Community to try and identify how representation could be achieved on SACRE.

SAC121 Westhill Awards consideration for an application deadline March 2019

Mrs Forbes advised that Schools could not apply directly for the awards and it was SACRE which had to facilitate the vetting of nominees therefore it was our responsibility to get this information out to the schools, via a newsletter for example.

Mr Cullen suggested that Mrs Forbes attend the next Primary School head teachers briefing to provide further details.

It was AGREED that Mrs Forbes would produce a briefing document in relation to the Westhill awards and to present the details to the next Primary Head Teachers briefing.

SCA122 Annual Report Draft to be tabled for consideration

Mrs Forbes suggested that if the Council wished to raise awareness and the profile of SACRE, then we should include details of the recently held awareness day in the Annual Report.

Further suggestions to be included in the Annual Report were the need for more representation on the Council/more diversity. Details of the R.E Quality Mark and the discussions that were had under the previous item in relation to Item 6 - Religion and World Views – The Way Forward, a National Plan for RE.

It was also suggested that the SIAMS inspections across Sunderland be included in the report and the agreed syllabus which was due in 2019 would be on the next agenda for discussion.

The Chairman suggested that the schools recent work on Armistice was something that should be reported on also.

It was AGREED that Mrs Forbes would draft a report for circulation to all Members for their comments.

SCA123 Dates and Times of the Next Meetings

The next meeting of SACRE would take place on Tuesday 26th March, 2019 at 4.30pm.

It was AGREED to schedule the future meeting in of Tuesday 25th June, 2019 subject to approval.

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

(Signed) Councillor L. Farthing,
Chairman