

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

At the annual meeting of the **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)** held at County Hall, Morpeth on Wednesday, 5 June 2019 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Councillor W. Daley
Chairman, in the Chair

COUNCILLORS

Crosby, B.

Campbell, Mrs. D.

TEACHER'S ASSOCIATIONS/UNIONS REPRESENTATIVES

Shaw, Mrs. H.

Walton, Ms. S.

CO-OPTED REPRESENTATIVES (Observers)

Dearlove, S.
Wardingham, Ms. M.

North East Humanists
Teacher - Collingwood School and
Media Arts College

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

P. André
D. Cookson

Dr. J. Miller
Mrs. A. Todd
A. Smith

Part-time RE Consultant
Commissioner for Secondary
Education
CoRE Commissioner
Democratic Services Officer
Management Trainee

1. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The membership and terms of reference of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education for the 2019/20 Council year were reported as set out below:-

(a) Representation of Other Churches and Faiths

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Roman Catholic Church	Mrs. J. Cousin (from September 2013)
United Reformed Church (URC)	Rev. E.H. Marley OBE (from January 2006)
Baptist Church	Represented by the URC, Rev. E.H. Marley OBE (until such time as the Baptist Church appoint their own representative)
Methodist Church (SENEA)	Represented by the URC, Rev. E.H. Marley OBE (from September 2016)
Judaism	Mrs. D. Van der Velde (from January 2005)
Sikhism	Harpal Singh (from June 2011)
Hinduism	Bhakti Rasa Adhikhara (from May 2009)
Islam	Ms. M. Khan (from 31 January 2018)
Quakers/Society of Friends	Mr. A. Gillespie (from 16 January 2019)

(b) Representatives of the Church of England

Mrs. E. Bainbridge
 Mr. P. W. Rusby
 Rev. J. Scott (from April 2015)
 Mr. C. Hudson (from May 2015)

(c) Representatives of the Teacher's Associations/Unions

Ms. C. Naylor (from 16 January 2019)
 Mr. T. Nicholls (from April 2010) and Mr. A. Duffield (from 1 October 2015) *Shared ATL rep*
 Mrs. H. Shaw
 Ms. S. Walton (from 5 June 2019)

(d) Representatives of the Local Authority (appointed from 1 May 2019)

B. Crosby
 Mrs. D. Campbell
 W. Daley (Chairman)
 T.N. Thorne

(e) Co-Opted Members (non-voting capacity)

Mr. S. Dearlove - Humanist rep (from 31 January 2018)
 Ms. M. Wardingham - special school teacher from Collingwood School and Media Arts College (from 7 March 2018)

(f) Observer (Academies' rep)

Mr. S. Gibson - Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust - Duke's

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Secondary School (from 21 September 2016)

Terms of Reference

Terms of reference as per Circular 3/89:-

“To advise the Authority upon such matters connected with religious worship in County schools and the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus as the Authority may refer to the Council or as the Council may see fit.”

Updates since the membership and terms of reference was agreed at the annual meeting of the County Council

Resignations - Members noted that it was to be Mrs. Helen Shaw’s last meeting of the SACRE. It was also noted that Miss Fran Gannon was stepping down. The Chairman thanked both for their valued contribution to the work of the Standing Advisory Council, and for the time they were able to devote to attend such meetings.

New Appointment - Members welcomed Mrs Sara Walton to the Northumberland SACRE as a teacher representative. It was reported that Sara was currently teaching at Rothbury First School and was a member of the NASUWT.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that the election of Councillor W. Daley as Chairman of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education for the ensuing 2019/2020 Council year be noted.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Ms. C. Naylor, Mr. A. Duffield, Mrs. E. Bainbridge, Rev. J. Scott, Mr. C. Hudson, Mrs. J. Cousin, Mrs. D. Van der Velde, Bhakti Rasa Adhikhara and Mr. S. Gibson.

4. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Mrs. D. Van der Velde be re-elected Vice-Chairman of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education for the 2019/20 Council year.

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5. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education held on Wednesday, 24 April 2019, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

6. COMMISSION ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (CoRE) REPORT

Members welcomed Dr. Joyce Miller to the SACRE to discuss the outcomes of the Commission's report. A copy of the powerpoint presentation has been filed with the signed minutes.

Members were advised that the Commission on Religious Education (CoRE) was established to review the legal, educational and policy frameworks for Religious Education, by a wide-ranging, inclusive and evidence-based process designed to inform policy makers about these areas. The ultimate aim was to improve the quality and rigour of RE and its capacity to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

Joyce reported that in September 2018, the Commission released its final report, Religion and Worldviews: the way forward. The report set out a National Plan for RE comprising of 11 recommendations, and called on the Government to consider and adopt it.

The CoRE had spent two years listening to evidence from a wide range of concerned parties including pupils, teachers, lecturers, advisers, parents and faith and belief communities. Over three thousand submissions were received. In this, its Final Report, CoRE therefore proposed that a new National Plan for RE should be enacted to ensure that learning in this area remained academically rigorous and a knowledge-rich preparation for life in a world of great religion and belief diversity.

The powerpoint presentation covered the following areas of discussion:-

- The current RE challenges both 'educational imaginary' and 'national imaginary'.
- Policy and principles of RE.
- The two main topics; Policy and Professional Practice.
- Policy recommendations and the four key areas in which change is needed: the subject name, a national entitlement for all, changes to the law and the creation of Local Advisory Networks, and the withdrawal of pupils and students.
- The proposed change of subject name to Religion and Worldviews and how this could let RE become more fluid, dynamic and more up to date with current issues across the world.
- The changes to the law that would amend legislation regarding SACREs. In place of SACREs there would be Local Advisory Networks and what these new bodies could look like.

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- The three Practice recommendations.
- The realisation that many local authorities pay a third party to write their RE agreed syllabus or copied from a pre-existing one.
- The recommendation to set up a new national body to write some exemplary programmes of study that schools could use. It was noted that within the recommendation it was clear that the people on that body should be there because of their expertise in RE, and not because they were there representing a religion.
- The proposal to increase all RE Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and CPD opportunities.
- The need for schools to recognise that children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was a cross-curriculum requirement. It should be a whole school issue. It was felt that the role or responsibility should not fall within one subject or on one teacher.
- The need for accountability, but this could be achieved by introducing a National Entitlement.
- Joyce’s own views and experience of teaching RE.
- The ambition to make RE exciting, relevant and not restrictive or bounded.
- Criticisms and responses. It was noted that there had been support for the recommendations from NATRE, NAHT, C of E and REC. However there had been criticism from the Roman Catholic Church and the Board of Deputies of British Jews.
- Where now and how to make RE relevant for pupils who have no connection to or interest in organised religion?
- Following on from the report what had the commission learnt and what could have been done better?
- The difficulties faced in trying to bring around change and could the new Ofsted framework offer support?

Following on from the presentation and discussion members of the SACRE were asked what they wanted to take from the CoRE report. Members agreed that they should consider ways of implementing recommendations they liked from the report. It was suggested that an agenda item be placed on the next meeting of the SACRE to discuss further. It was also suggested that an article about Joyce’s visit be in the next SACRE newsletter.

RESOLVED that the information be noted and a thank you extended to Dr. Joyce Miller for attending the Northumberland SACRE.

7. AN UPDATE OF CONTACTS WITH SCHOOLS AND TRAINING PROVISION

The SACRE members received an update from Mr. Phil André, RE Consultant, about his provision of RE in-service training and contacts with schools since the last related meeting (a copy of which is filed with the signed minutes as Appendix B).

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Regarding the email from Cardiff University about a guidance and resource pack about primary RE published in 2018, it was suggested that schools be advised of the pack via the council's school communication system.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

8. NORTHUMBERLAND SACRE NEWSLETTER

Consideration was given to the arrangements for the articles to be included in the next edition of the SACRE Newsletter, Issue No. 41, for September 2019.

Suggested articles for inclusion in the next newsletter were:

- An article about the secondary school resources available from the National Secular Society.
- An article following today's meeting regarding Dr. Joyce Miller's visit.
- An article regarding the Holocaust Memorial Day event for Whalton Church of England, Belsay and Stamfordham primary schools on Monday 21st January 2019.
- An article regarding Cambo First School's Easter Journey.
- An article regarding National Interfaith Week.
- Invite comment/feedback from schools about the newsletter.

Members were advised that at the last round of training sessions all school governors had been reminded of the publication of the SACRE newsletter.

With regard to seeking views on the usefulness of the SACRE newsletter it was suggested that a piece of work take place to gather schools' views including how the document could be improved, what do schools want to see included in the document and how in general the SACRE could improve its communication with schools.

Reminder any copy documents in word format to be sent to Phil André in the first instance by the end of July for inclusion in the next edition of the SACRE newsletter – issue No.41 for September 2019.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the information be noted, and
- (b) Alex Smith, Management Trainee, be instructed to facilitate a project to explore if communications between schools and the SACRE could be improved upon including the usefulness of the SACRE newsletter.

9. QUESTIONS ABOUT RE AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Members considered questions about RE and collective worship that senior school leaders might consider at the start of every academic year (perhaps in discussion

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with teachers, TAs and HLTAs responsible for teaching/delivering RE and/or collective worship). (Report filed with the signed minutes as Appendix C).

It was reported that these questions had been circulated to all schools. It was suggested feedback on how helpful these questions had been to senior school leaders form part of the piece of work to be undertaken by Alex Smith, Management Trainee.

RESOLVED that the information be noted and feedback on the questions circulated form part of the project to be undertaken by Alex Smith.

10. NORTHUMBERLAND SACRE ACTION PLAN JANUARY 2019 TO DECEMBER 2021

Members considered the Northumberland SACRE Action Plan January 2019-December 2021 and points raised following the School Survey about RE and Collective Worship. (Report filed with the signed minutes as Appendix D).

It was agreed that the RE Conference be moved to a date to be agreed in 2020 to allow officers more time to plan the event.

It was also agreed that at the next meeting of the SACRE consideration be given to establishing a working party to discuss the review of the Policy and Guidelines on Collective Worship.

RESOLVED that the report and comments made be noted.

11. ITEMS RAISED TO NOTE

Buddhist Representation

It was advised that a member of a Buddhist Centre in Newcastle had shown interest in attending future meetings of the SACRE. Members welcomed the interest and suggested the Buddhist Centre contact the clerk to discuss further.

SACRE school visits

It was noted that both Collingwood School and Media Arts College and Rothbury First School had suggested that they could host future meetings of the SACRE.

Spirited Arts 2019 Competition

It was noted that a circular regarding the competition had been sent to schools and it was hoped that pupils would be encouraged to submit entries into this year's event.

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RESOLVED that the information be noted.

12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED that the following meetings of the Northumberland SACRE be noted:-

Wednesday, 13 November 2019 at 10.00 a.m.

Wednesday, 5 February 2020 at 10.00 a.m.

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____

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