

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

At a meeting of the **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)** held at Collingwood School & Media Arts College, Stobhillgate, Morpeth on Wednesday, 13 November 2019 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Councillor W. Daley
Chairman, in the Chair

COUNCILLORS

Crosby, W.

TEACHER'S ASSOCIATIONS/UNIONS REPRESENTATIVES

Duffield, A.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND REPRESENTATIVES

Hudson, C.

REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER CHURCHES & FAITHS

Khan, Ms. M.
Van der Velde, Mrs. D.

Marley, Rev. E.H.
Bhakti Rasa Adhikhara

CO-OPTED REPRESENTATIVES (Observers)

Wardingham, Ms. M.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

P. André
D. Cookson

A. Smith
Mrs. A. Todd

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

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13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D. Campbell, Councillor T.N. Thorne, Mrs. E. Bainbridge, P.W. Rusby, Mrs. S. Walton, Mrs. J. Cousin and Mr. S. Dearlove.

14. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education held on 5 June 2019, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

15. 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 A).

It was noted that the week of the SACRE meeting was also Interfaith Week with many activities happening across the county.

It was reported that following the recent successful SACRE school survey, two SACREs (Newcastle and Darlington) had asked to adopt Northumberland's approach and reproduce its questionnaire. Northumberland had agreed on the understanding that the findings would be shared. It was noted that a comprehensive benchmarking report would be drafted once all data had been collated.

With regard to Whittonstall First School and Phil André's discussions with the RE lead, Chris Hudson offered to work with the school on this matter.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

16. NORTHUMBERLAND SACRE NEWSLETTER

(a) Members received a copy of the 41st issue of the Northumberland SACRE Newsletter, dated August 2019, that had been circulated to all schools and was published on the schools' website (a copy of which has been filed with the signed minutes).

It was reported that after many enjoyable and rewarding years (20+!) engaging in a variety of tasks on behalf of Northumberland County Council Phil André had decided it was time to retire from his post as Part-time RE Consultant, effective from 1st April 2020. It was noted that as a consequence, the local authority was looking to appoint

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a new person, on a part-time basis of between 20 to 30 days per annum, with someone who ideally had recent or current classroom experience and a proven track record in relation to RE and collective worship.

Phil advised everyone that the next meeting of the SACRE would be his last. He had enjoyed working with the SACRE and felt that Northumberland was a dynamic SACRE. He was very proud of all of the work and goals achieved by the SACRE and it had been a pleasure to be involved with it for so many years.

RESOLVED that the newsletter be received, with thanks extended to those involved in its production.

(b) Consideration was given to the arrangements for the articles to be included in the next edition of the SACRE Newsletter, Issue No.42, for January 2020.

Suggested items for the next newsletter included articles on:-

- HMD 2020.
- The Annual RE CPD Event. It was hoped to arrange the next event in early 2020 with visits to houses of worship dominating the agenda.
- Farmington Scholarships.
- Ofsted Framework and RE.

Members were reminded that any copy articles were to be received in Word format documents, A4 portrait size and any accompanying photographs to be in jpeg format, and sent to Mr. André for proof-reading by mid-December. The aim was to have the next newsletter printed over the school holidays for distribution in schools in January 2020.

RESOLVED that the position be noted.

17. NASACRE ISSUES

The NASACRE Newsletter – SACRE News

Members received the NASACRE Briefing No. 23, for information (copies of which were filed with the signed minutes).

Members welcomed the news that there was to be an increased focus on Religious Education in the new Ofsted framework, which would provide an opportunity for SACREs to reassess their support for RE in their schools, and greater weight for insisting on compliance.

Reminder of the web site link: www.nasacre.org.uk for other articles of interest.

RESOLVED that the NASACRE Briefing No. 23 be received.

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18. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY (HMD) 2020

Members were advised that the theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2020 was Stand Together so it was likely that much emphasis would be on stories of the Righteous among the Nations. It was noted that Holocaust Memorial Day 2020 would also mark 75 years since the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

A working group had been set up to arrange the event and Members of the SACRE had been asked for their views.

Members suggested the following:-

- Hold the event in a more public place rather than at County Hall.
- Encourage schools to arrange activities (the HMD website was a great source for ideas).
- Promote the event more widely to encourage more members of the public to attend.
- Highlight the systematic persecution the Roma and Sinti during the period of Nazi rule.
- Include a few of the stories of the Righteous among the Nations with recognition of the number of women who rescued Jews during the Holocaust.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

19. RE AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP UNDER THE NEW OFSTED FRAMEWORK

Members were briefed on the new Ofsted framework and learned that the most significant Ofsted change from current arrangements was the introduction of a 'quality of education' judgement. This combined aspects of the previous key judgements of 'teaching, learning and assessment' and 'outcomes' to provide a more holistic view of standards, particularly focusing on the curriculum.

Members discussed the 'deep dive', which involved gathering evidence on curriculum content, implementation and impact over a sample of subjects, topics or aspects of teaching and learning. It was noted that the intent of the deep dive was to interrogate and establish a coherent evidence base on the quality of education.

Members were advised that under the new inspection framework, inspection teams would devote greater attention to RE and collective worship. Many SACREs had found the letter from Neil Lawson of the Curriculum Unit of the Department for Education useful as it set out the DfE expectations around:

- The requirement to teach RE (including what was expected from academies and free schools).
- Advice about the application of the agreed syllabus, and whether qualifications could be stipulated as part of that.

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- How to handle reports of a school not meeting its duty to teach RE.

It was confirmed that feedback from inspections would be analysed and council officers met with Ofsted on a termly basis to discuss inspection reports.

To help SACREs to be proactive with all schools in alerting them to the expectations of the DfE and Ofsted, the NASACRE had prepared a template letter as detailed within their latest newsletter. It was reported that following the NASACRE guidance, a tailored letter for Northumberland schools had been drafted and was tabled at the SACRE meeting (a copy of which has been filed with the signed minutes). It was envisaged that this letter would be forwarded to all schools once agreed by the SACRE. It was suggested that it would also be beneficial if the letter was sent to all chair of governing bodies, for information.

RESOLVED that the draft letter about RE compliance be agreed and circulated to all schools and chair of governing bodies.

20. COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE SACRE AND SCHOOLS

The SACRE was presented with the findings of the exercise carried out to examine how effective communications were between the SACRE and schools (report filed with the signed minutes as Appendix C).

The questionnaire was designed to gather feedback on the SACRE Newsletter that was sent to schools. It was designed to determine how it was received, was it frequent enough, what was useful and how it could be improved. It was distributed as a Google form survey by Northumberland County Council to schools. The questionnaire was open to answers for four months from the end of June 2019 to the beginning of November 2019. There were 21 responses received.

It was noted that the e-courier system was the main communication portal for schools. An email every week was sent to all schools with a link to the e-courier. Examples of the different sources of information and guidance available on the e-courier were reported. It was hoped that all schools disseminated all information on the e-courier to the relevant staff or department as appropriate. However, the SACRE felt that this instruction may need to be reinforced to ensure important information was and continued to be shared with all.

Members discussed ideas on how to improve the profile of the SACRE. It was reported that there had been a recent art competition run by the council for the Tour of Britain cycle race where winning schools were allocated cash prizes. It was suggested that a similar competition/incentive could be created about the SACRE.

Members thanked Alex Smith for carrying out this questionnaire on behalf of the SACRE and suggested that this exercise be carried out on an annual basis to allow for constant feedback and improvement of the SACRE Newsletter.

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RESOLVED that the information be noted.

21. NORTHUMBERLAND SACRE ACTION PLAN JANUARY 2019 TO DECEMBER 2021

The Northumberland SACRE Action Plan January 2019-December 2021 was produced for monitoring. (Report filed with the signed minutes as Appendix D).

RESOLVED that the Northumberland SACRE Action Plan January 2019-December 2021 be received and progress on fulfilling the action points be noted.

22. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED that the next scheduled meeting of the SACRE be Wednesday, 5 February 2020 at 4.00 p.m. at Collingwood School & Media Arts College, Stobhillgate, Morpeth.

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____

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