

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

At a meeting of the **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)** held at County Hall, Morpeth on Wednesday, 24 April 2019 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Mrs. D. Van Der Velde
Vice-Chairman, in the Chair

COUNCILLORS

Crosby, W.

TEACHER'S ASSOCIATIONS/UNIONS REPRESENTATIVES

Shaw, Mrs. H.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND REPRESENTATIVES

Hudson, C.

REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER CHURCHES & FAITHS

Cousin, Mrs. J.

CO-OPTED REPRESENTATIVES

Dearlove, S.

ACADEMIES' REPRESENTATIVE (observer)

Gibson, S.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

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P. André
D. Cookson

Mrs. A. Todd
A. Smith

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

40. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor W. Daley, Councillor T.N. Thorne, Mrs E. Bainbridge, Bhakti Rasa Adhikhara, Ms. C. Naylor and Ms. M. Wardingham.

41. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education held on 16 January 2019, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

42. COMMISSION ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (CoRE) REPORT

Members were advised of an opportunity to invite Dr Joyce Miller, a CoRE Commissioner, to speak at a future meeting of the SACRE. It was reported that Dr Miller had taught in secondary schools in Coventry and Northumberland and was a former Chair of the RE Council, AREIAC, Bradford SACRE and the Schools Linking Network.

Members welcomed the opportunity to discuss the Commission on Religious Education (CoRE) Report with Dr Miller and suggested she attend the June meeting, if this date met with her diary appointments.

RESOLVED that Dr Miller be invited to attend the June 2019 meeting of the SACRE.

43. 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 reported that after requesting additional information from the National Secular Society a full set of secondary school resources entitled Exploring Secularism had been received which looked extremely useful. The set of resources were tabled at the meeting for anyone to view. It was noted that the National Secular Society's

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website was very accessible and contained lots of information for anyone wanting to learn more.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

44. NORTHUMBERLAND SACRE NEWSLETTER

(a) Members received a copy of the 40th issue of the Northumberland SACRE Newsletter, dated April 2019. It was noted that the newsletter would be circulated to all schools and published on the schools' website (a copy of which has been filed with the signed minutes).

A query was raised as to whether feedback was sought from schools on their views of the SACRE Newsletter and if they thought it was a positive resource. It was suggested that within the next newsletter schools be invited to give their opinions on how useful the document was and also provide them with the opportunity to suggest any other items that could be included in later editions.

Members discussed the issue of ensuring the SACRE Newsletter was sent to the most appropriate person within a school for it then to be forwarded to all that would benefit from the information contained. It was advised that officers could gather this information. It was suggested that an agenda item could be included at the next round of school governor meetings to promote awareness of RE resources available including the SACRE Newsletter.

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.41, for September 2019.

Suggested articles for inclusion in the next newsletter:

- An article about the secondary school resources available from the National Secular Society.
- An article following Dr Joyce Miller's visit to the June meeting of the SACRE.
- 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.

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 the end of July. The aim was to have the next newsletter printed for distribution in schools in September 2019.

RESOLVED that the position be noted.

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45. NASACRE ISSUES

(a) The NASACRE Newsletter – SACRE News– Issue 22

Members received the NASACRE Briefing No. 22, for information (a copy of which has been filed with the signed minutes).

Members were advised that the NASACRE 2019 Conference and AGM was to be held on 22 May in Manchester and advised that anyone wanting to attend should contact Mr. D. Cookson.

Members noted the article regarding the DfE Letter which detailed the expectations of the government with regards to school compliance in RE. It was hoped that this would help SACREs to be proactive in challenging schools of all types to provide the very best RE.

Members' attention was drawn to the national recommendation on SACRE funding and the suggestion that a local authority should allocate at least 2% of the Central Services School Block to the SACRE. It was reported that the Northumberland SACRE currently was allocated 0.4% of the Central Services School Block and managed comfortably on this funding, although if that was to change they could possibly seek more.

Reminder of website link: www.nasacre.org.uk for other interesting articles.

RESOLVED that the NASACRE Briefing No. 22 be received.

46. NORTHUMBERLAND SACRE ACTION PLAN JANUARY 2019 TO DECEMBER 2021

Members received the Northumberland SACRE action plan for January 2019 to December 2021 (copy filed with the signed minutes as Appendix B).

With regard to the 2006 NCC Collective Worship Policy and Guidelines, it was suggested that the SACRE may want to revisit the policy to see if it still reflected current best practice. It was also noted that a review of the RE agreed syllabus in the academic year 202 to 2021 would need to take place.

It was suggested that the action plan be a standard agenda item on the SACRE agenda and the document be kept up to date to show when objectives were achieved.

RESOLVED that:-

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- (a) The Northumberland SACRE Action Plan January 2019 to December 2021 be received.
- (b) A standard item be placed on future agendas to consider the Northumberland SACRE Action Plan January 2019 to December 2021.

47. THE DECLINE IN GCSE AND A LEVEL ENTRIES IN RE/ETHICS AND PHILOSOPHY

Members received initial thoughts from teachers in five schools about possible reasons behind why the number of entries for RS/ethnics and philosophy had declined so significantly in recent years (report filed with the signed minutes as Appendix C).

Discussion took place regarding the fact that RE was not a national curriculum subject and the impact this had on student uptake. The exclusion of RS from the EBacc had also heavily impacted on the number of entries. However, there was now a greater emphasis on a broader education which would probably include subjects such as drama, art and music. It was still unknown if RE would be singled out as one of these broader education subjects.

It was noted that this area of concern was included within the Northumberland SACRE Action Plan January 2019 to December 2021 and would continue to be monitored.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

48. THE SCHOOL SURVEY ABOUT RE AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Members discussed possible action points inspired by the autumn 2018 schools' survey (report filed with the signed minutes as Appendix D).

Discussion took place following the actions points raised and noted that many of them could be addressed through the SACRE Newsletter.

With regard to urging schools to identify training needs. It was proposed that headteachers be provided with a briefing note to be used at the start of each academic year or at appraisals to help identify staff training needs and list those courses/training opportunities available.

Members sought clarification regarding why no Roman Catholic schools had engaged with the research project. It was suggested contact be made with the Dioceses to discuss.

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Going forward, it was agreed that the points inspired by the autumn survey should not be lost. Instead the points identified should be made into actions points for the SACRE to work through.

RESOLVED that

- (a) The information be received
- (b) The action points raised be actioned throughout this coming year.
- (c) The action points be included as an addendum to the Northumberland SACRE Action Plan January 2019-December 2021.

49. URGENT BUSINESS

Character Education Workshop

Mr. C. Hudson informed all of a grant from the Church of England Trust to deliver character education within a couple of the county's special schools. He advised that he was looking forward to the workshops and hoped to be able to provide a positive report back to the SACRE after the events had taken place.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

SACRE Survey

Members were informed that a request had come from Newcastle City Council and Darlington Borough Council for permission to duplicate Northumberland's SACRE school survey and to share our findings with them. Members did not have any objection to them reproducing Northumberland's survey but suggested their findings be shared. Members welcomed the opportunity to benchmark against neighbouring authorities and recommended others could also embark on the exercise to get a clearer understanding of RE and collective worship across the region.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

50. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the next meeting of the Northumberland SACRE be hold on Wednesday, 5 June 2019 at 10.00 a.m. at County Hall, Morpeth.

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____

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