

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

At the meeting of the **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)** held at Committee Room 2, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF. on Wednesday, 7 February 2024 at 4.00 pm.

PRESENT

D. Van-Der-Velde
Vice Chair – in the Chair

COUNCILLORS

L. Bowman N. Morphet (Virtual)

CHURCH OF ENGLAND REPRESENTATIVES

C. Hudson (Virtual) P. Rusby

REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER CHURCHES & FAITHS

S Dearlove J Miller (Virtual)
J Simpson (Virtual) N Vyas (Virtual)

TEACHING ASSOCIATIONS/UNIONS

A. Duffield (Virtual)

OBSERVERS

C Curtis (Virtual)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

D. Cookson	Head of School Improvement
L. Denyer	Head of Members Services, Elections and Deputy Monitoring Officer
R. Little	Assistant Democratic Services Officer
C. Weir (Virtual)	Part Time RE Consultant

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33 **ANNOUNCEMENT**

D. Van Der Velde advised of the sad passing of Reverend Ted Marley on 18 December 2023. Members observed a minute's silence in his memory.

34 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from R. Cant, Councillor Seymour and C. Dixon.

35 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education, held on Wednesday 8 November 2023 as circulated, be confirmed as a true record, signed by the Chair.

36 **AN UPDATE OF CONTACTS WITH SCHOOLS AND TRAINING PROVISION**

C. Weir – Part Time RE Consultant, informed members that since the last meeting she had attended a networking event and had delivered a training session on 17 January. This was attended by 17 teachers and was on the topic of Judaism systematic and thematic units in the Agreed Syllabus and she was currently preparing for the next session which would be Hindu Dharma.

C. Weir had also spent time supporting RE leads to embed the Agreed Syllabus in their schools by viewing their curriculum overviews and answering any questions, as well as helping assist teachers by signposting further resources.

Members were appreciative that network meetings and training sessions had been opened up to other schools that were outside Local Authority control but were still in the area and requested information for the next SACRE meeting on which schools had attended meetings and for members to discuss how to reach schools that were not attending training.

RESOLVED that this was noted.

37 **HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY**

D. Van Der Velde explained to members that the Holocaust Memorial Day event at County Hall on 25 January, had been a success and had contained presentations from Corbridge Middle School along with Collingwood School and Media Arts College.

Members communicated that they would like the Chair of SACRE to send a letter to Corbridge Middle School and Collingwood School and Media Arts College to thank and congratulate them on their presentations at the Holocaust Memorial Day Event.

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RESOLVED that this was noted.

38 **MEETING OF CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

D. Cookson - Head of School Improvement informed members that a meeting had taken place on 26 October 2023 between himself, Councillor Seymour – Chair of SACRE and A. Kingham – Executive Director of Children's Services to discuss SACRE's objectives and plans for the upcoming year. Members noted that the meeting would continue to take place each year.

RESOLVED that this was noted.

39 **SACRE ANNUAL REPORT**

D. Cookson - Head of School Improvement, thanked Members for their feedback on the SACRE Annual Report and noted that the final changes would take place by the end of the week and would be circulated to all relevant parties.

RESOLVED that this was noted.

40 **OFSTED ANNUAL REPORT**

Members discussed the Ofsted Annual Report and were disappointed to read that the provision of RE nationally was of a poor standard and queried whether SACRE could offer more support to schools to increase the standard of RE. The possibility of contacting subject specific school governors who monitor quality of teaching was discussed to gain more insight into the RE provision in Northumberland schools.

Members also noted that a number of schools which followed the Northumberland Agreed Syllabus were Voluntarily Controlled C of E schools which had inspections through the SIAMS framework which explicitly looked at RE, and in turn provided a report on the quality of RE teaching.

RESOLVED that this was noted.

41 **WORKFORCE AND EXAMINATION DATA**

J. Miller explained to members that there were three forms of data that SACRE were able to look at from a national standard, which were Ofsted reports, GCSE and A-Level results and workforce data.

Members noted that the majority of Secondary and High schools in Northumberland were Academies and therefore were not obliged to share their data with the Local Authority. It was suggested that D. Cookson ask for the exam results on behalf of SACRE and present back at the Autumn 2024 meeting of

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Members agreed that J. Miller should receive the workforce data and then would compare it to the websites of Northumberland schools to scrutinise RE curriculum and report back to SACRE at a future meeting.

Ofsted reports for Northumberland schools can be found via:
<https://northumberlandeducation.co.uk/ofsted-visits-2023-2024/>

RESOLVED that J. Miller would report back to SACRE about the workforce data and that D. Cookson would request examination results from Northumberland Secondary and High Schools.

42 **SACRE CONSTITUTION WORKING GROUP**

J. Miller introduced the report which set out potential changes to SACRE's constitution and invited members to discuss each point sequentially.

1. To add in the word "collective" which reflected the Law on RE and Collective Worship.
2. No comments were made.
3. To replace "municipal" with "academic" as SACRE was a committee with a main focus on Religious Education in schools.

Councillor Bowman noted that as a County Councillor they were appointed within the municipal year however J. Miller commented that each committee was of equal status and value, and it would be unfair to give precedence to Committee D above the others.

4. To ensure that members had enough time to read papers, the agenda should be circulated ten working days prior to the meeting.
5. SACRE dates to be agreed at least one year in advance of the meeting as to avoid potential clashes and also to add matters arising as a standard agenda item.
6. Members discussed the recruitment of new members to Committee A by combining the "Free Churches" denominations into a single role and recruitment of potential members without a religious belief or worldview.
7. To include a member of the Baha'i community to Committee A.
8. To include a representative of higher education professional associations whose members are involved in initial teacher education to Committee C.
9. To include a representative of the local RE network meetings to Committee C.
10. To include a clause for Co-Opted members to serve for a period of two years then it would be reviewed by SACRE members.

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11. To include that the Chair and Vice Chair should be members of different committees.
12. To include that the Chair would be appointed for four years.
13. To include that SACRE members should agree with the RE Councils “Code of Practice”.
14. For an AGM to be a formal part of the first meeting of the year which members would look at the constitution, membership and to receive a report on finance of SACRE.

Members noted that a further report would be provided at the June meeting of SACRE.

RESOLVED that this was noted.

A. Duffield left the meeting at this point.

43 **NORTHUMBERLAND SACRE ACTION PLAN**

D. Cookson – Head of School improvement asked members to send their feedback on whether they thought points on the current action plan attached to the agenda were relevant, and an updated action plan would be circulated prior to the next SACRE meeting.

Resolved that this was noted.

44 **NORTHUMBERLAND SACRE NEWSLETTER AND RESOURCES WEBPAGE**

Members were reminded of the website link:
northumberlandeducation.co.uk/SACRE

D. Cookson thanked members of the committee who had submitted information for the site.

RESOLVED that this was noted.

45 **TRAINING AVAILABLE TO SACRE**

Members were reminded of the NASACRE 2023-24 virtual training programme and asked to inform the Clerk when they had completed any additional training.

RESOLVED that this was noted.

46 **NASACRE ISSUES - ISSUE 37**

RESOLVED that this was noted.

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CHAIR.....

DATE.....

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