

Minutes

of the Virtual Meeting of the

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Tuesday 11 July 2023

held via Microsoft Teams

Meeting Commenced: 15.45 Meeting Concluded: 17:53

Councillors:

Present: Caritas Charles

Other Members of the Panel

Group A – Christian and other religious denominations

Present: Don Cameron, British Humanist Association

Apologies: Tom Leimdorfer, Quaker

Absent: Martin Taylor, Free Churches (URC, Baptist, Methodist)

Vacancies: Hindu Community, Jewish Community, Muslim Community, Sikh Community, Catholic Community, Buddhist Community.

Group B – Church of England

Present: Karen Sancto, Pauline Dodds

Group C – Teachers Associations

Present: Steve Webber, PHANS, Emma Richardson, Secondary School Representative, Jane Arney, Primary School Representative Alice Spiers, Secondary School Representative

Absent: Rebecca Poole, Lorraine Brawn, Primary School Representatives Sue Fisher, NASUWT

Colette Miyagawa, SEND Representative

Vacancies: Association of Teachers and Lecturers, NUT Primary, NUT Secondary, Secondary Heads Association, SHINS, VOICE

Officers from North Somerset Council

Adam Robertson, National RE Adviser

Jacqui Scott, Head of Learning and Achievement

Harriet Isherwood, Committee Services Support Officer

SACRE Welcome and apologies for Absence

1 The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted.

SACRE Public Discussion (Standing Order SO 17)

2 None.

- SACRE 3 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37) (Agenda item 3)**
None
- SACRE 4 Minutes and Matters Arising (Agenda item 4)**
Concluded: that the notes of the meeting held on 1 March 2023 were agreed as a correct record (to be ratified at the next formal meeting).
- SACRE 5 SACRE Membership Update (Agenda item 5)**
Adam noted that the Panel was losing one Secondary school representative, but was gaining a new one, and had also recruited a new Jewish representative, but was struggling to find a Muslim representative.
- SACRE 6 Public Examination Data (Agenda item 6)**
The data demonstrated a mixed picture across secondary schools, with the SACRE's priority focus being the percentage of entries and attainment. In schools where all children were entered for an RE GCSE there was a lower pass rate, compared to a higher pass rate in lower cohorts. The number of entries in North Somerset was shown to be below average. Some schools use automatic enrolment into RE, but since the introduction of EBacc (in which RE was not included), voluntary opt-ins had reduced. The Diocese had made attempts to encourage schools to run an RE GCSE and offered support to schools that required it. School representatives noted the difficulty in securing RE secondary school teachers, and requested resources to help promote RE's benefits and importance outside of careers involving religion to improve uptake. Officers suggested a joint meeting with the Youth Parliament to reach more young people.

Concluded: that Alice Spiers provides the SACRE with resources to promote RE GCSE, and that arrangements be made to liaise with the Youth Parliament.
- SACRE 7 Website Monitoring (Agenda item 6)**
SACRE members were assigned schools websites to monitor and grade against criteria relating to their school's RE capacities. The majority of schools were found to have compliant descriptions of their offers, but generally much less information was provided about religious assemblies and the right to withdraw. There were also old copies of policies published on several websites. The SACRE panel expressed a keenness to continue the exercise and found it largely beneficial.
- SACRE 8 Health Check**
Panel members reflected positively on the re-establishment of the HUB in North Somerset, and the introduction of the WIRE Award, but there remained a need to return to pre-2020 engagement levels.

Representatives shared they had struggled with keeping RE's high profile amongst other demands. Inspections had been generally positive.

SACRE 9 Ofsted Reports monitoring

Adam had reviewed the Ofsted reports completed since the previous meeting, which showcased the positive impact studying RE had in preparing children to live in a diverse society. One report highlighted a development point around the lack of awareness of non-Christian religions, so Adam offered to visit struggling schools to offer help and advice and advised that completing the WIRE Award could also be beneficial. Several representatives offered to share connections who could give talks in schools or virtually, especially during religious festivals, and it was suggested that a list be made publicly available.

Concluded: that a list of non-Christian contacts be shared with the SACRE.

SACRE 10 SACRE website

Some inaccuracies were noted on the SACRE section of the North Somerset Council website.

Concluded: that the inaccuracies be amended.

SACRE 11 Local Updates

Diocese of Bath & Wells

The Diocese informed the Panel that they had sent a CPD booklet to all church schools in the area and were to promote the next LTL conference in their newsletter going to schools in September.

Learn Teach Lead Conference

Panel members who attended the conference commented it was a beneficial event for networking, and they were able to meet with a range of teachers and religious representatives.

Dates for Meetings during 2022-23 Municipal Year (Agenda item 8)

- Tuesday 7 November 2023 – 4pm to 6pm

Concluded: that the date of meeting during the 2023-24 Municipal Year be noted.

Chairperson
