

# Minutes

of the Virtual Meeting of the

## Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

### Tuesday 07 November 2023

held via Microsoft Teams

Meeting Commenced: 4:00pm Meeting Concluded: 5:35pm

#### Attendees:

Councillors: Caritas Charles

#### Group A – Christian and other religious denominations:

**Present:** Tom Leimdorfer (Quaker).

**Apologies:** Don Cameron (British Humanist Association).

**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.

**Absent:** Pauline Dodds.

#### Group C – Teachers Associations

**Present:** Steve Webber (PHANS), Matthew Gray (PCSA) - Secondary School Representative, Jane Arney – Primary School Representative

**Apologies:** Emma Richardson, Secondary School Representative, Colette Miyagawa, SEND Representative, Rebecca Poole, Lorraine Brawn, Primary School Representatives

**Absent:** Sue Fisher, NASUWT, Alice Spiers (no contact details), Secondary School Representative

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

**Officers from North Somerset Council:** Angela Hill (National RE Adviser), Kathy England (Interim Head of Learning and Achievement), Jessika Robinson (Committee Secretary).

**SACRE 13 Election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson (Agenda item 1)**  
**Resolved:** that Councillor Caritas Charles be elected as Chairperson.

**Councillor Charles in the Chair.**

**SACRE 14 Welcome and apologies for Absence (Agenda item 2)**  
The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted.

**SACRE 15 Public Discussion (Standing Order SO 17) (Agenda item 3)**  
None.

**SACRE 16 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37) (Agenda item 4)**  
None

**SACRE 17 Minutes and Matters Arising (Agenda item 5)**  
**Concluded:** that the notes of the meeting held on 11 July 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

**SACRE 18 SACRE Membership Update (Agenda item 6)**  
A discussion led by Angela Hill.

There was a general discussion around North Somerset Council SACRE Membership, vacancies, and the responsibility of North Somerset Council to determine membership criteria and the ownership of the “Letter of Recommendation” process for recruiting new members.

**SACRE 19 Website Monitoring (Agenda item 7)**  
Feedback was requested from members who have been involved in the website monitoring project to date. It was expressed that there have been several benefits in reviewing the subject content available within the 3 year cycle. It was noted as being useful in SIAMs readiness and for drawing focus to how the curriculum is presented externally.

**SACRE 20 Health Check (Agenda item 8)**  
Members were asked to reflect on how the year has been so far and what support would be useful for the next coming year.

There was an in depth discussion about the challenges faced in recruiting RE specialists into vacancies and that it can be difficult to develop individuals into RE subject specialists due to constraints on time.

Members also discussed the current global issues and the role that Religious Education has in curating tolerance, compassion and combating hate within societies and schools. It was shared that interventions are already taking place, such as the preparations for Holocaust Memorial Day.

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**Ofsted Reports monitoring (Agenda item 9)**

It was noted that there had been one OFSTED inspection in North Somerset in the current period, with no mention of Religious Education or Collective Worship. Members were informed that there are very few “deep dives” nationally for Religious Education. It was discussed that it would be desirable for NSC SACRE to write to the lead inspector as other SACRES are doing this, to express concern about the lack of inspection focus on Religious Education.

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**Subject Survey Report (Agenda item 10)**

Presented by Kathy England.

Members were advised that there was a significant need to increase membership and approach more schools by sending out letters and that Childrens Services will review how best to deliver this.

Members were guided to salient points outline by the report:

1. Insufficient time allocated to teach and lack of ambitious curriculum. This is common across all Humanities.
2. School decisions that are not taken in the best interest of all pupils.
3. Lack of consideration about what it means to be scholarly.
4. Lack of clarity on what constitutes reliable knowledge.
5. Teaching approaches that do not help pupils to remember and recall (OFSTED focus on recall).
6. Approaches to assessment that are poorly calibrated to RE curriculum.
7. Insufficient development of RE practitioners to address gaps in RE knowledge.

It was also recommended that members review page 8-21, relating to ambition for all and sequencing substantive knowledge:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-review-series-religious-education/research-review-series-religious-education>

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**SACRE website (Agenda item 11)**

It was noted that whilst it is a helpful resource area, the NSC SACRE webpage requires updating. NSC will determine how to resource this and take the appropriate action.

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**Local Updates (Agenda item 12)**

Angela Hill provided an update from the Lead, Teach, RE network. Future dates for training and networking were shared with members:

1. Lead, Reach, RE in June 2024
2. Outcome and RE leader training is delivered annually. Members were asked to consider if this should be delivered more frequently.
3. SW Primary Hub meeting w/c 13 November 2023
4. The Diocese of Bath and Wells have also been offering their training across the network, this is open to all community schools as well as church schools.

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**National Updates from RE Today (Agenda item 13)**

Update from Angela Hill.

It was noted that RE today have taken an active role in lobbying Parliament concerning the influence of Religious Education.

Members were advised that there is a £1000 grant available for PGSE students (England only) who choose to specialise in RE. It was discussed that this may support the national recruitment issues.

Low cost and free of charge networking and development opportunities were discussed, alongside the benefits of becoming NASACRE members for North Somerset SACRE and the fees associated with this.

**Resolved:** All members voted to agree joining NASACRE subject to NSC budget approval.

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**Annual Report (Agenda item 14)**

Draft report presented by Angela Hill.

Members were advised that the data was being presented in provisional format.

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**School Workforce Data (Agenda item 15)**

Presented by Angela Hill.

It was discussed that there is some inaccuracy with the data on the understanding that RE can be incorporated under other umbrella areas

of the Curriculum such as PSHE, Ethics and Citizenship and that terminology is not standardised across education.

Members were also informed of the barrier to data access North Somerset Council face as all bar one school are academies. The data belongs to the academy, and it is at their discretion whether this is shared with NSC. A conversation developed around whether there was any perceived benefit to obtaining this data, and if so, how best to collaborate with academies to secure this. It was also discussed that there was awareness that the data could be inaccurate or even incomplete due to non-reporting or incorrect reporting at source. It was agreed to approach academies' and seek feedback on what their current RE offer looks like and what support they may like from North Somerset SACRE.

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**Date of next meeting (Agenda item 16)**

The next meeting is confirmed for:

- Monday 11 March 2024 - 4pm (JR to issue meeting invite)

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Chairperson

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