

# Minutes

of the Virtual Meeting of the

## Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

### Tuesday 21 January 2025

held via Microsoft Teams

Meeting Commenced: 4:00pm      Meeting Concluded: 4:55pm

#### Attendees:

**Councillors:** Caritas Charles

**Apologies:** None

**Absent:** Martin Williams

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

**Present:** Tom Leimdorfer (Quaker)

**Apologies:** None

**Absent:** Martin Taylor (Free Churches, URC, Baptist, Methodist) Don Cameron (Humanists UK)

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

#### **Group B – Church of England**

**Present:** Louise Jenkins (Diocese of Bath and Wells)

**Apologies:** Tonya Nixon

**Absent:** None

#### **Group C – Teachers Associations**

**Present:** Steve Webber (PHANS)

**Apologies:** Colette Miyagawa (SEND Representative), Jane Arney (Primary School Representative), Matthew Gray (PCSA - Secondary School Representative)

**Absent:** Lorraine Brawn, Rebecca Poole (Primary School Representatives)

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

**Officers from North Somerset Council:** Helen Caldwell (Interim Head of Learning and Achievement), Sarah McGahern (Early Years Consultant – Children’s Services), Pip Hesketh (Assistant Director – Education Partnerships, Children’s Services), Jesse Bellamy (Committee Services Support Officer)

**Other:** Ian Nicholson (RE Today)

<b>SACRE 1</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies for Absence</b> Apologies were received and noted from Colette Miyagawa, Jane Arney, Matthew Gray, and Tonya Nixon.
<b>SACRE 2</b>	<b>Public Discussion (Standing Order SO 17) (SACRE 29)</b> None.
<b>SACRE 3</b>	<b>Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37)</b> None declared.
<b>SACRE 4</b>	<b>Minutes and Matters arising</b> <b>Resolved:</b> it was confirmed and agreed that the meeting of 11 March 2024 was quorate and that the Minutes were accurate. The meeting of 2 July 2024 was not quorate and therefore Notes were taken of the proceedings.
<b>SACRE 5</b>	<b>Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair for 2024-25 Municipal Year</b> <b>Resolved:</b> that Councillor Caritas Charles remain acting as Chair.
<b>SACRE 6</b>	<b>National SACRE Update – Spring 2025</b> Ian Nicholson presented the report. The report contained data from the biannual NATRE survey on Religious Education (RE) in primary schools.  The data was expected to have been received from the Department for Education (DfE) in October but was instead received in the second week of January, due to the recent change of Government.  The Ofsted report cited in the report mentioned only three schools which had made specific reference to RE and SACRE. Schools had had the option of putting in the percentage of curriculum time spent on RE. Three schools had not put forward their hours for RE. When submitting data for hours spent on RE, this also included related subjects such as philosophy.  North Somerset was generally in a good position regarding the amount of time spent teaching RE in primary schools. It was noted that the average amount of time recorded for teaching RE was between 1 to 1.5 hours per week. The average number of hours in a school week was 32.5, and this equated to roughly a lesson a week.  In primary schools, 24% of RE in was delivered by teaching assistants. 35% of primary schools had no set budget for RE for the year. However, it was noted

	<p>that primary schools did not have set budgets for different departments, whereas secondary schools did.</p> <p>North Somerset was seeing a breadth of religions and worldviews being taught, with a notable increase in Bahá'í and Jainism to reflect the faith background of pupils actually attending schools. This was in line with the recommendation that the curriculum being taught reflected the actual make-up of pupils in the classroom.</p> <p>Regular meetings had taken place between NATRE and DfE to discuss how RE would fit into the curriculum, including GSCE and A Level. The DfE were also looking at how non-religious worldviews were being included.</p> <p>Ofsted was going to be changing and moving away from a 'single judgement' system. Within the new framework, it was going to be important for the curriculum to meet the different needs of children to ensure they were being included in lessons, e.g. children within SEN. Ian Nicholson was going to work with the RE network on this.</p> <p>It was asked whether there was there a 'lessons learned' process regarding the right to withdraw, and whether the right to withdraw should remain in place as an option.</p> <p>The right to withdraw meant being withdrawn from certain content within a course, not being withdrawn from the entire subject itself. There was guidance from the DfE with more information on what the right to withdraw actually entailed. Ian would send this round to the SACRE Committee for reference.</p> <p>Concerns were raised that religious teaching resources available from some organisations were not adequately tailored for different age groups. It was suggested there may have been a need to guide RE teaching staff towards content and resources which was relevant for the age they were teaching. Recent Ofsted reports in RE comments had been made where 'off the shelf' resources had been adapted for use appropriately with age group.</p> <p>It was noted that it would be good to engage with the growing diversity of communities across the North Somerset region, as it be a could challenge to get diversity element in to talk with schools.</p>
<b>SACRE</b> <b>7</b>	<p><b>North Somerset SACRE Report (Draft)</b></p> <p>Ian Nicholson presented the report, which needed additional data before it could be sent on to the DfE. The DfE originally required the report by 31<sup>st</sup> December but had extended the deadline to 31<sup>st</sup> March.</p> <p>It would be confirmed with Helen Caldwell and Sarah McGahern which data would be required, so it could be provided for the report.</p> <p>No formal complaints had been brought to the North Somerset SACRE during the year. It was confirmed that any parent could complain to the relevant</p>

	<p>school or the SACRE regarding matters of RE teaching, for example visits to places of worship which they felt were not appropriate for their child, or if visitors into schools had said something which they believed to be inappropriate. The SACRE would investigate but only in cases where SACRE operated within the school (for example, SACRE would not investigate cases involving academies.)</p>
<b>SACRE 8</b>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>It was agreed that the SACRE reports should be passed on to the Education Excellence Partnership Board for review and comment. The reports would be sent to Pip Hesketh to action this.</p> <p>Helen Caldwell confirmed the SACRE membership for North Somerset Council had been paid for.</p>

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Chairperson

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