

North Yorkshire County Council

Children and Young People's Service

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

Minutes of a meeting held via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 6th October 2020

PRESENT (THAT IS, THOSE WHO JOINED THE DISCUSSION):

Christian Denominations and such other religious denominations as, in the Authority's opinion, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area:

Professor John Adams (Humanist), Bill Kimberling (The Church of St. Jesus of Latter-Day Saints), Helen Sellers (Baptist) and Mohinder Singh Chana (Sikhism)

Church of England: Reverend Simone Bennett and Margaret Gibson

Teachers Associations: Tara Askew, Rosemary Laverack and Douglas Rice-Bowen

Local Authority: County Councillors Janet Jefferson, Patrick Mulligan and Annabel Wilkinson

Officers: Adrian Clarke (Principal Education Advisor - Support), Daniel Harry (Democratic Services Manager), Patrick Duffy (Senior Democratic Services Officer – Clerk to SACRE), Heather Russell (Senior Education Advisor); Olivia Seymour (Professional Religious Education Advisor)

		Action
199	<p>ELECTION OF CHAIR</p> <p>Patrick Duffy reported that Members had been asked at the start of September if they would wish to put themselves forward for the role of Chair. One nomination had been received and that was from Helen Sellers.</p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>That Helen Sellers be elected as Chair of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education for the next twelve months.</p> <p>Helen Sellers in the Chair.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Members for putting their confidence in her. She would do her best to serve the Committee well during her tenure.</p> <p>She also thanked her predecessor, Olivia Seymour, for all that she had done.</p>	

200	<p>ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR</p> <p>The Chair advised that no nominations had been received for the position of Vice-Chair following the request to Members. However, since then, Douglas Rice-Bowen had indicated that he would be prepared to take on the role.</p> <p>The Chair asked if there were any other nominations. There were none forthcoming.</p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>That Douglas Rice-Bowen be elected as Vice-Chair of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education for the next twelve months.</p>	
201	<p>CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <p>The Chair stated that, for the particular benefit of any members of the public who might be viewing the meeting, the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) advises the Local Authority on Religious Education and Collective Worship and supports their delivery – especially through the Agreed Syllabus.</p> <p>She welcomed Members to the meeting and, in particular, Tara Askew and Rosemary Laverack, who had been appointed to the Committee as Teacher Representatives.</p> <p>Tara Askew works at Tadcaster Grammar School and is the Curriculum Team Leader for Religion, Philosophy and Ethics.</p> <p>Rosemary Laverack is a Senior Teacher at Langton Primary School and the Lead on Religious Education.</p> <p>Members of the Committee then introduced themselves.</p> <p>NOTE: The Teacher Representative vacancies were created by the resignations of Sarah Beveridge, Hannah Harrison and Hannah Spencer. This leaves one vacancy for a Teacher Representative.</p>	
202	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies were received from Nasr Moussa Emam (Muslim); Barbara Belsham (Methodist); and County Councillor Robert Heseltine.</p>	
203	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
204	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>That the Minutes of the meeting held on 30th January 2020 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.</p>	Clerk

205.	<p>MATTERS ARISING:</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
206.	<p>NOTES OF INFORMAL DISCUSSION ON 21ST MAY 2020</p> <p>The Chair reported that when it became clear it would not be possible to meet in May, due to the coronavirus pandemic, it was recognised that there would not be a formal meeting of the Committee for some months. Therefore, an informal discussion was arranged in May to update Members on various issues.</p> <p>She added that the Notes of that discussion had been circulated. Progress had been made on a number of matters. It was not a formal meeting and therefore the Notes did not require approval.</p> <p>Professor John Adams sought clarification that a corrected version of the Religious Education Syllabus had been published online, picking up the errors that he had pointed out.</p> <p>Olivia Seymour confirmed that this had been done.</p> <p>Professor Adams repeated his previous view that the copy that had been published was very poor but he was pleased that this had now been done.</p> <p>NOTED.</p>	
207.	<p>CHANGES IN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY STAFFING</p> <p>Adrian Clarke, Principal Education Advisor (Support) in the School Improvement Service updated as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The establishment of a SACRE is a statutory duty of the Local Authority who are required to provide two roles - a named Liaison Officer and a Professional Religious Education Advisor. - The Local Authority Officer's role is to liaise with SACRE and the Clerk; represent the Director of Children's' Services; and to provide local school context and assist in preparation, publication and distribution of the Annual Report. The role also entails liaison with the Religious Education Advisor, when this is not the same person. - The Professional Religious Education Advisor is required to provide advice, guidance and training to both SACRE and Schools and to provide national guidance and updates and to assist in drafting reports and agendas. - For the period September to December 2019, Rebecca Swift, the Equalities Adviser within the School Improvement Service, fulfilled both roles. Rebecca voluntarily left the service at the end of December at the conclusion of a restructure. - In January, he had taken on the role of a strategic link with SACRE, and Katharine Bruce, took on an operational role. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It was determined that, following the restructure, the Local Authority lacked the specialist expertise of a Religious Education Advisor within the service. It was decided that this role would be commissioned. This is in line with a number of other Local Authorities. Olivia Seymour has been commissioned as the Religious Education Advisor. - The Local Authority Officer support had also been strengthened. Heather Russell, Senior Education Advisor, is providing operational resource and will be liaising with the Chair, the Professional Religious Education Advisor and himself and assist in drafting documents such as the Annual Report and collecting data and case studies from Schools. - His role would be to attend SACRE; provide a strategic overview; report back to Senior Leadership Teams; and liaise with other Council services affected by the work of SACRE. <p>The Chair expressed her thanks to the Local Authority for the increased support that they are providing.</p> <p>NOTED.</p>	
208	<p>RETURN TO SCHOOLS</p> <p>Adrian Clarke provided an update:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - During the summer term, the Local Authority published Guidance for Schools on Collective Worship and Religious Education and provided links to a number of online resources so that School Leaders and Teachers had access to a variety of sources to assist them with provision of home learning. - Schools opened fully to all children and young people in September and currently there is an overall attendance rate of approximately 87%-89% across the county. There are occasions when pupils are having to home learn or self-isolate, in accordance with Government Regulations. - It is intended to shortly publish guidance for wider re-opening and how Religious Education and Collective Worship could be approached and a North Yorkshire County Council SACRE Newsletter has been finalised. Both documents have been circulated to the Committee, for information, as the Local Authority wanted to advise SACRE of these documents prior to wider circulation. - If SACRE are agreeable, both documents referred to above will be sent to Schools this week via the "Red Bag" which is the official communication method for sending information to Schools. - Guidance and risk assessments have been issued from the Music and Health and Safety Service with regard to music and singing. A number of Schools are undertaking collective worship within their 'bubbles' by utilising Microsoft Teams and other video conferencing software between classrooms. 	

	<p>- Reverend Simone Bennett asked if an amendment could be made to the Newsletter, which talks about the provision for Religious Education. It is about Religious Education support for all Maintained Schools and does not make a distinction for religiously Designated Schools. Adrian Clarke indicated that he would share suggested wording with Simone outside of the meeting.</p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>a) That Guidance on Wider re-opening of Schools and how Religious Education and Collective Worship could be approached, together with a North Yorkshire County Council SACRE Newsletter, be sent to Schools, via the “Red Bag”.</p> <p>b) That Adrian Clarke liaise with Reverend Simone Bennett about revised wording in the SACRE Newsletter regarding the provision of Religious Education support.</p>	<p>Principal Education Advisor</p> <p>Principal Education Advisor</p>
209.	<p>DRAFT SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20</p> <p>Considered –</p> <p>The draft Annual Report of SACRE for 2019/2020.</p> <p>Adrian Clarke reported that, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the report will look significantly different from that of previous years. For example, School Case Studies were unable to be collected in the summer term and, although public examinations took place, we cannot yet report on North Yorkshire’s data. It may be possible to include the data in the finalised report, which will be brought back to the Committee for approval.</p> <p>There are a number of grammatical errors that will be picked up for the final version.</p> <p>Adrian talked Members through the sections of the Report.</p> <p>Douglas Rice-Bowen queried whether some reference should be included to the effect that future meetings are likely to be held remotely and that this is legally permissible. Patrick Duffy said he would arrange this.</p> <p>Daniel Harry added that the County Council would hold remote meetings until May 2021 and possibly beyond that. After May, it would be up to SACRE to decide what method of meeting best suits its purposes and its engagement with the public.</p> <p>The Chair pointed out that the Annual Report relates to 2019/20 and, therefore, any additional wording about meetings going forward, should be minimal.</p> <p>Professor Adams felt that the report should show individual’s attendance records, in line with many other public documents.</p> <p>Daniel Harry advised that, for Councillors, the County Council produce an Annual Attendance Record, which is published on its website. For Committees that are similar to SACRE, the County</p>	

	<p>Council tend not to include attendance, but there is no reason why this should not be included.</p> <p>Reverend Simone Bennett felt there should be further discussion about this.</p> <p>The Chair suggested Members indicate their view to Patrick Duffy outside of the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair thanked officers for their work on the Annual Report.</p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) That the draft Annual Report be noted, together with the fact that a revised draft will be presented to the Committee at its January meeting. b) That a form of wording be included to the effect that, going forward, meetings are likely to be held online as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, but that this is permissible. c) That Members communicate to Patrick Duffy their personal preference as to whether an individual's attendance should be recorded in the Annual Report (which will be placed on the website); as part of the Annual Attendance Record (which will also be placed on the website); or not to publish individual attendance (except, of course, in the Minutes of each meeting.) 	<p>Principal Education Advisor</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>ALL</p>
210	<p>NORTH YORKSHIRE SACRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2020/2022</p> <p>Considered –</p> <p>The final draft of the above-mentioned document.</p> <p>The Chair said this was being presented for approval, as it had not been possible to consider this earlier, with the Committee not having met formally since the start of the year.</p> <p>A progress column had been added, using a <i>Traffic Light System</i>. The increased links with the Local Authority Officers was evident from the number of “green” areas in the progress column. These will continue to be developed.</p> <p>She added that the document will continue to be a work in progress and that progress will continue to be monitored and reported to the Committee.</p> <p>Echoing his earlier point, Professor Adams commented that the proposed Skills Audit would be of little use if Members do not attend meetings. Olivia Seymour advised that national guidance from NASACRE has been received about membership and attendance and perhaps this could be looked at at a future meeting, to ensure capacity and full membership of the Committee.</p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>That the Development Plan for 2020/2022 be approved.</p>	<p>Chair</p>

211	<p>RELIGIOUS STUDIES “A” LEVEL AND GCSE NATIONAL PICTURE 2020</p> <p>Considered –</p> <p>A paper by Olivia Seymour.</p> <p>She stressed that this has been a stressful and unusual year for our Schools, particularly in respect of external examinations and highlighted the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is very encouraging that Religious Education at “A” level and GCSE have both fared well, considering the challenges often faced in the time provided by Schools for Religious Studies examinations. - When the Locally Agreed Syllabus was approved last year, an approval was given for an accredited course at Key Stage 4 to be followed by Schools. Owing to the coronavirus pandemic, it has not been possible to build an accurate picture of numbers. Over the next year, however, an activity for SACRE will be to monitor the standards in Secondary Schools, in particular. - Uncertainty remains as to what will happen with next year’s examinations. We know that there will not be specific changes to the content of Religious Studies papers. However, challenges include the time spent home learning by pupils over the spring and summer of 2020 and where Schools send home pupils to self-isolate. As soon as we are made aware of the impact of the changes, Members will be informed. - Consideration needs to be given to the support we can provide to Schools as they navigate these challenges. <p>NOTED.</p>	
212.	<p>OFSTED REPORTS FOR NORTH YORKSHIRE SCHOOLS AND ANY PARTICULAR CONCERNS ARISING FROM THESE</p> <p>Adrian Clarke advised that Ofsted has suspended its Inspection Framework due to the coronavirus pandemic. It has now instigated a framework of visits in the Autumn Term to Schools.</p> <p>Quoting from an Ofsted operational note: <i>Interim visits will help parents and the public to understand how individual schools are returning to the school’s normal curriculum. We will not be evaluating what leaders did during the spring and summer term 2020, when schools were not open to all pupils, but we may need to understand the broad context of its impact on the school.</i></p> <p><i>The lead Her Majesty’s Inspector (HMI) will write a short letter after each interim visit. The letter will summarise briefly the discussions inspectors had with leaders. This is to provide parents with information about what leaders are doing to help pupils back into full-time education. Letters will not provide any evaluation or graded judgement. They will be published on our reports website.</i></p>	

	<p>Adrian Clarke added:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There have been four such visits to North Yorkshire Schools this term, and we await publication of the letter in all cases. - The Inspections will look at Schools normal curriculum, including Religious Education and Collective Worship. - A legal note had recently been received from the Department for Education confirming Schools have a legal duty to provide home learning to pupils who are not in school for a period. - As we move back into a framework of Inspections, we will work to analyse the information from these and appraise the Committee, as appropriate. <p>NOTED.</p>	
213.	<p>TRAINING FOR SCHOOLS</p> <p>Olivia Seymour advised that, further to the update that she had provided at the discussion in May, about the move to online learning, there had been a number of Continuing Professional Development opportunities that North Yorkshire Schools had attended. These included a Humanism Workshop and some of the Muslim Services Learner Workshops.</p> <p>This year, the plan is that all Religious Education Networks will be online. Three are planned, termly, for Primary Schools. These will be at accessible times for Teachers. There will also be a Secondary Religious Education Network online each term, together with a Training Day for Teachers who are new to teaching Religious Education.</p> <p>The Networks are an opportunity to share updates and signpost Teachers to new resources, linking into the teaching of the Locally Agreed Syllabus, supporting Teachers in planning an appropriate curriculum for their School's setting.</p> <p>When the Ofsted Inspections recommence, SACRE will look at the feedback from Schools and decide if any further training needs to be provided.</p> <p>Douglas Rice-Bowen felt that, as we move into the digital world, consideration needs to be given as to the support available for vulnerable students for home schooling. How can we, as a SACRE, support parents of vulnerable children to continue to engage with some quality Religious Education within the current context?</p> <p>Olivia Seymour responded that some reflection will be required on this. However, during lockdown, Schools were signposted to known and approved home learning resources. The Subject Association and the Religious Education for England and Wales shared resources that were disseminated to Schools. The termly Newsletter for Schools is another mechanism that can be used in this regard.</p> <p>The Subject Association had provided a template letter for Schools to put on their website for parents and carers explaining the place</p>	

	<p>of Religious Education in the curriculum and dispelling myths of what Religious Education is and is not as an academic subject. That may be something we want to send out to Schools.</p> <p>She will also raise with NASACRE whether there is any national guidance on these points.</p> <p>Adrian Clarke added that there is a wider link to other Council Departments on this. The School Improvement Service look at general attendance patterns but not whole school attendance. That is something that could be examined.</p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>a) Raise with NASACRE whether there is any national guidance as to the support available for vulnerable students for home schooling.</p> <p>b) Consider whether the School Improvement Service should look at whole school attendance rather than general attendance patterns.</p>	<p>Professional RE Advisor</p> <p>Principal Education Advisor</p>
214.	<p>CORRESPONDENCE</p> <p>The Chair said she had not received any correspondence.</p>	
215.	<p>DATES OF MEETINGS IN 2021</p> <p>The Chair advised that four meetings are proposed, rather than three, as it is felt that three meetings are not enough to consider the matters required, particularly the Annual Report.</p> <p>In addition, it is suggested that alternate meetings commence late afternoon to help facilitate attendance by Teachers.</p> <p>Professor Adams pointed out that one date in the published papers is incorrect; Thursday 24th June, should read Tuesday 22nd June.</p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>That meetings of SACRE in 2021 be held as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tuesday 26th January 2021 at 4.00 p.m. ➤ Tuesday 20th April 2021 at 2.00 p.m. ➤ Tuesday 22nd June 2021 at 4.00 p.m. ➤ Tuesday 21st September 2021 at 2.00 p.m. <p>NOTE: The first two meetings and, quite possibly, all four, will be held remotely.</p>	<p>ALL TO NOTE</p>
216.	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT</p> <p>On this occasion, there was no other business.</p>	

The meeting concluded at 3.04 p.m.

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