

North Yorkshire Council

North Yorkshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 10 December 2024 commencing at 4.00 pm.

Group A: 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 (Humanism)*, Sarah Beveridge (Society of Friends), Hayden Cohen (Judaism)*, Abhijeet Kulkarni (Hinduism), Mohinder Singh Chana (Sikhism).

Group B: Church of England: Revd Claire Soderman.

Group C: Teachers' Associations: Sarah Hodgson.

Group D: North Yorkshire Council: Cllr Alyson Baker (Chair)*, Cllr Simon Myers.

Apologies: Councillors Janet Jefferson and Annabel Wilkinson, Tara Askew, Tom Clayton, Jo Colledge, Nasr Moussa Emam, Lee Talbot and Heather Russell (Senior Education Advisor).

** denotes in person attendance*

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

72 Welcome and Announcements

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting. Members of Group A and B were reminded of the RE Hubs website, which provided useful resources and advice to RE teachers and practitioners, and the provision of national school speaker training was highlighted. Members were advised to contact the Professional RE Advisor or visit the RE Hubs website for further information. The Chair also highlighted recent attendance at the NASACRE In Conversation event, which had allowed SACREs to share best practice and support, and which was a positive and useful event. The next event was scheduled for 20 March 2025.

73 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Tom Clayton and Nasr Moussa Emam and (Group A), Lee Talbot (Group B), Tara Askew and Jo Colledge (Group C), Councillors Janet Jefferson and Annabel Wilkinson (Group D), and Heather Russell (Senior Education Advisor)

74 Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 10 September

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2024 were agreed as an accurate record.

75 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

76 Public Participation

There were no public questions or statements.

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77 Member Presentation

Sarah Beveridge delivered a presentation on the Religious Society of Friends, also known as Quakers.

The presentation set out the history of the society, including its roots in the 17th century when it was founded by George Fox, in response to church conventions which prompted him to establish a church which relied on individual “inner light”. The history of Quakers was explored, including their role in the business world as nonconformist laws prevented Quakers from attending universities. The role of Quaker banks such as Barclays and Lloyds was discussed, as well as businesses like Clarks, Frys, Rowntrees, and Cadburys.

The key beliefs were set out, in particular the primacy of the individual who is believed to be able to experience God without the need for a formal church structure. SACRE members heard about *Quaker Faith and Practice*, which outlines belief, standards, and practices, as well as offering practical advice on a range of everyday topics. Quaker meetings were described, including their free structure, which allowed for periods of silent reflection as well as discussion.

SACRE members asked a range of questions and learned more about the individual experience of Quaker worship, which was often very individual and varied greatly from person to person. There were no formal holy days or celebrations, and Quaker meeting houses lacked symbols and were often very simple spaces. Members shared their own experiences of Quaker meetings, including those which involved other faiths and were peaceful and welcoming experiences. Breckenbrough School was identified as the only Quaker school in North Yorkshire, although it was not a maintained school.

The SACRE thanked Sarah Beveridge for the presentation, particularly commenting on the value of personal reflections and lived experience, and how informative the item had been.

Agreed: That the presentation be noted.

78 SACRE Annual Report

The SACRE considered the draft 2023/24 Annual Report, which was presented by the Principal Education Advisor. It was outlined that the report was not yet finalised, because there was a delay with national Key Stage 4 data. The final deadline for submission was 31 March 2025, and with the next meeting of SACRE scheduled for 1 April 2025, there would be no further opportunity to approve the Annual Report. Therefore, it was explained that delegated authority was being sought to approve the report once the final data had been confirmed and added. There were a number of minor errors which had been noted and would be corrected before the final version was submitted.

It was agreed to amend the recommendation in the cover report at 4.1 to reflect the fact that the Chair would have final authority to approve the annual report.

Resolved:

- a) subject to the addition of data which are still being sought, the Annual Report for 2023/24 be approved.
- b) delegated authority be given to the Chair to make the necessary non-material changes to the report by adding the data, in consultation with the Principal Education Advisor (Monitoring).

79 Update by the Professional Religious Education Adviser

The Professional RE Advisor presented a report updating the SACRE on local and national RE matters, and informing on work undertaken since the last meeting. The work of the Primary RE Networks was highlighted, which were attended by 26 subject leaders and headteachers in the autumn term. These sessions focused on visits and visitors to the RE classroom.

The Curriculum and Assessment Review was also discussed, which had been received and sent out to members for an individual response before the deadline in November, because the short deadline did not allow for consideration at a full SACRE meeting. The report outlined the responses from national organisations, and the SACRE discussed the challenges faced by schools in delivering effective and meaningful RE to pupils with the subject outside the National Curriculum. It was expected that further information on the review and potential impact for SACREs could be provided in the April 2025 meeting.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

80 Update by the Local Authority

The Principal Education Advisor (Monitoring) presented the Local Authority's report, which set out the work undertaken since the last meeting. The results of 11 Ofsted inspections, which had taken place between the last update on 10 September and 31 October, were outlined. Bedale High School had been identified through the inspections to not be following the Locally Agreed Syllabus, and officers and followed up with the school and confirmed that this is now being done. Comments relating to Collective Worship and RE were discussed, and it was agreed that officers would liaise with a school to invite attendance at a future meeting.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

81 Work Programme

The Clerk presented the work programme which outlined ongoing and forthcoming work. It was highlighted that the proposed date of the meeting on 23 September 2025 clashed with Rosh Hashanah, and members agreed to rearrange this meeting.

Agreed: That:

- a) The report be noted.
- b) The meeting scheduled for 23 September 2025 would instead take place on 30 September 2025.

82 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting, on Tuesday 1 April at 16:00, was noted.